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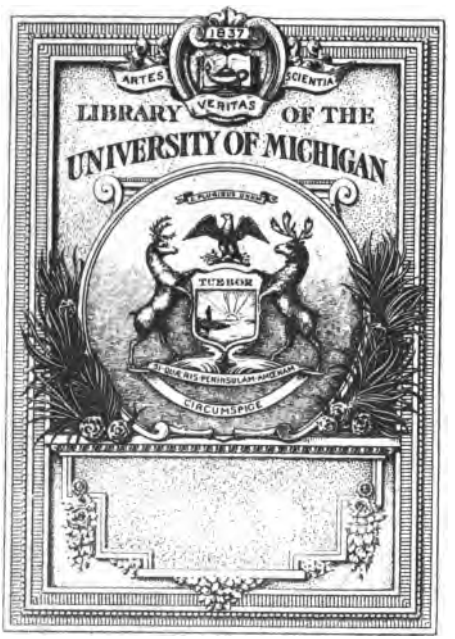

THE GIFT OF
Prof. F. N. Scott.

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To

Dr. Fred N. Scott,

Compliments of the

author.

Dec. 9, 1915.

TOLTERNICUS,

Astronomer of Thorn.

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

OTTO CARL GSANTNER, JR.

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by
OTTO CARL GSANTNER, Jr.,
Langdon, Washington, D. C.

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01-30-28 LWB

TO THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Niclas Tolternicus, astronomer of Thorn.
Bartoldus, an astronomer, friend to Tolternicus.
Albert, Prince of Brandenburg.
Campeggio, Bishop of Thorn, uncle to Tolternicus.
Cajetan, head of the Inquisition in Thorn.
Andreas, archbishop, brother to Tolternicus.
Rheticus, a savant, friend to Tolternicus.
Bernard, friend to Tolternicus.

La Roche, a burgher of Thorn.
Von Lohenstein, a count of Thorn.

Angelo, an alchemist.

Tolternicus' mother.
Ursula La Roche.
Agnes La Roche.

Apparitions of Bartoldus, Ptolemy, etc.

Priests, friars, monks, a warden, sacristans, guards, soldiers, servants, five litter-bearers, citizens, mob, etc.

Gift
Fred Newton Scott
12-14-27

TOLTERNICUS, ASTRONOMER OF THORN.

ACT I.

SCENE 1.

(A dark street in the city of Thorn. Night.)

(The shouts of a mob can be heard in the distance.)

(Enter a citizen, running.)

Cit. What, ho! Torches! Torches!

(Enter a second citizen, armed with a club, followed by others.)

2nd Cit. They come! They come! See where they come!

3rd Cit. What, will they burn to-night?

2nd Cit. A glorious prisoner. One base Bartoldus, an astronomer. He has a thousand heresies committed in his dark study.

3rd Cit. What, an astronomer?

2nd Cit. An astronomer.

3rd Cit. Then 'twill be sport for God.
O stars, heed not his invocations.
Look down upon our holy city Thorn.
That the all-quenching clouds burst not their bottoms
And drench our righteous fires ere the base flesh
Of this detested heretic burn in ashes.
What was his greatest fault?

2nd Cit. Ask not me. For what these villian watchmen of the heavens in their owl-haunted turrets, with strange, notched sticks and parchments full of tallow, do and presume I have no guess. But he is caught and judged, and the Tribunal sends him to burn. See, where they bring him in.

(Enter torches, priests with Bartoldus in the death gown of the Inquisition. Round him a mob.)

1st Cit. Cast a stone at him. (He stoops to pick up a stone.)

3rd Cit. Beat him! A cudgel!

(The second citizen pushes his club into Bartoldus' face.)

Bar. Have mercy, friends. I ne'er did do you harm.

Mob. Heretic! Blasphemer!

(They strike him.)

Bar. Is there no justice, God? O, I shall sink.—

1st Cit. Thou art a villian and a heretic,
Scoffer of God, defamer of our heaven,
Murderer of Christ. A heretic! A villian!

All. A villian heretic! Strike him again.

3rd Cit. Let all the pests of hell light on his head,
That brings the plague upon our city Thorn.

All. The plague! The plague!

(They crowd round him, striking him.)

Bar. Is there no pity? O, good citizens.—

1st Cit. Call on your stars to come and help you now,
For all God's heavens are full.

2nd Cit. But who comes here in such perplexed haste,
With horror-ctricken visage and bare head?

1st Cit. It is Tolternicus, our noble astrologer,
That would dare fire and death if the need were.

3rd Cit. He is the nephew of Campeggio,
Bishop of Thorn, brother of holy Andreas,
And friend unto the very prince himself.

2nd Cit. Then he is come to see this blasphemer
Go to his firey grave.

1st Cit. What, ho! Tolternicus!

(Enter Tolternicus.)

Tol. O sirs, where is Bartoldus? Can it be?—
My friend, Bartoldus!— Back! Back! you gaping fools—
Bartoldus, you bleed— O my friend.

All. Let him bleed. He is an heretic condemned.

Tol. O Bartoldus, speak.

Bar. It is our fear made live.
While at my peaceful labors there came some men,
Hailed me away before the high Tribunal,
Seized on my papers, tortured my wife to tell
Pain-racked untruths against me, and spoke judgment.

I am condemned of holy Inquisition,
And even now must burn.

Cits. Burn!

(A priest touches Tolternicus.)

Priest. Tolternicus, stay not God's righteous hand.
He's a base heretic and is adjudged.

Cits. Away!—

Priest. Fire must wash out the devils in his soul
And purge this town of Thorn from her foul friends.

Tol. This cannot be.
I here speak out, this man is innocent.
Cut loose his fetters. I, Tolternicus,
Avow this man my friend.

Mob. Treachery! Treachery! Burn!

(They crowd nearer.)

1st Cit. Make way. Here comes the Prince.

(Enter Prince Albert of Brandenburg, on horseback, with soldiers. The mob makes way.)

Alb. What is this bluster in our peaceful streets?
Tolternicus.— What, my good friend.

Tol. O Albert,
Now are you come in time to give God's mercy.
Here is Bartoldus doomed— our valiant friend,
And the inquisitors send him now forth
To feed the burning fagot.

Alb. Bartoldus? No.—

Bar. It is too true.

Tol. O save him, you who can.

(A priest comes forward.)

Priest. O sons of Thorn.— O most majestic Prince,
This man has been before the high Tribunal.
He is adjudgéd and the ban of Rome
Hangs on his head. Beware. Beware. Stay not
Our righteous progress.

Alb. Holy sir, this is too sudden.
Take back Bartoldus to the city prison.
I will stand witness. Give him further trial.
Delay this hasty burning. Give him more trial.

Priest. His trial was swift because his guilt was [plain.

Alb. What is his guilt?

Priest. He is a heretic.
His papers show communication with Luther,
And under trial has admitted all.

Alb. Bartoldus is this true?

Bar. O sir, 'tis true
Some letters from Luther I most surely had,
But in their contents nothing traitorous.—
That in my private view I am no Roman,
Before my knowing friends, I do attest
This has been known to all for twelve long years.
It is not this that calls my present death,
But that my papers make me dangerous
For holding different views of our high heavens
Than Holy Church decrees.

Cits. A heretic! Burn!

Alb. Peace!

Priest. No hand can save him. With his own mouth
Has he confessed his guilt, and he must die.
The Lutheran curse invades our territories,
And like the pest lays plagues upon our souls.
Fire must crush down what else will damn our land.
O, in the name of holy Inquisition,
I do pronounce him excommunicate—
And be he prince of all the German north—
That with strong hand and impious lawlessness
Now stays our righteous justice.

Alb. O, Bartoldus,
With your own words have you brought down on you
This fearful punishment. This is the law.
In Brandenburg I bear the princely power,
Can pardon or condemn, but my hand's reach
Goes not unto the doomed of our Church.
If the Tribunal has adjudged you, I,
With all my power, cannot save you more.
God help you, friend. I cannot save you.

Tol. You cannot save?
Alb. Tolternicus, I cannot.
Tol. Albert. Albert. It is our friend— Bartoldus.
How many nights have we gone arm in arm?
His love is pledged to you and yours to him
By every solemn virtue under heaven.
Alb. Tolternicus,
Have you unlearned the world in your dark study?
This is no private place. Here is no closet.
Spare your hot words, for lightly spoken here
(Pointing to the mob.)
Is lightly flaunting the lion in his den.
Tol. I care not if they be a hundred lions.
This is no time to weigh with coward words.
There stands Bartoldus doomed, and will you falter,
Will you stand by and see him reft away,
When with a mere command you can now shield him?
Alb. Tolternicus, rash man, are you so bold?
Have you seen all God's misery in your travels,
And know not yet the power of our Church?
Curb your swift tongue, or the enraged vortex
That gripes our gifted friend may suck down you.
Tol. Albert, I know you for no moral coward.
These words are strangers to your princely tongue.
I'll not believe them, but will ask again.
Take up Bartoldus—
Alb. It can never be.
Were he my brother, were he my loved son,
I could not save him from this pondered doom.
Tol. Damnation! Then will I. Back, you vile beasts,
That have but howling mouths instead of hearts!
Back, blazing rabble! O, by the holy God!
(He seizes a torch from one of the bearers and, waving it in the faces of the mob, forces them back.)
Alb. Tolternicus, are you mad?
1st Cit. Lay hand upon him.
2nd Cit. Down! Down! Down!
Cits. Let him burn too.

Alb. Seize him, my soldiers.

(Albert's soldiers seize Tolternicus.)

Tol. O Albert, what is this? He is our friend,
And he is innocent. He is our friend.

Priest. Lay hold upon him that disturbs our order.

Mob. Treachery! Treachery! Down with the villian!

(Albert raises his hand.)

Alb. Peace!— In the name of Brandenburg and law,
Tolternicus, forbear. For this great breach
There is a penalty I dare not name;
For, named, it is adjudged. Since that I know
The feelings that this prompted, and am loath
To see so good a citizen of Thorn
Suffer for his own kindness, you are pardoned.
This present warning be your punishment,
But if this happen twice hope not our grace.—
You, men of the Tribunal, go your way.
Lead off your prisoner and do your office.
If any stops, lay hold and send him me.
The law's the law, while we are Brandenburg.

Bar. Albert, farewell. I had not hoped for more.
These terrible times make even our kings to cowards.
Tolternicus, my friend, Tolternicus,
I thank you from my heart. Grieve not for me.
I am not weak and I can die for right.
To lift my kind is all my high offence,
And, studious to that end, here has it brought me.
Tolternicus, brave friend, beware.
Already are there murmurs for this action.
Men will not thank you for this noble deed,
And the quick tongue of ever-ready malice
Lay at your door false but still fearful views.
There wait the fagots that will eat my flesh.
If you persist my fate will be your own.
Earth has no thankfulness for her uplifters.
God may feel for us— man is made of stone.

Cits. The fagot! The fagot! Heretic, burn!

Bar. But I have counseled what I could not keep.
My going is but as it seems, to death.

O soon will I appear in spirit before thee.
In spirit will I live on.
Tol. O that I live.
To hear thee say that word.— In spirit.—
Bar. In spirit.
For never can true striving on this earth
Be but enrecompensed with deathless living.
Call but upon me in thy hour of trial,
My spirit will come and speak.
Cits. Fire! Burn! Torment!
Heathen and heretic! Torment! Torment!
Bar. Care for my children. Tell my anguished wife,
Bartoldus dies for his high-striving life.
Priest. On, in the name of God!
(The procession passes, the torchlight flaring on the horses of Brandenburg and his soldiers.)
Tol. Down, O my heart! Burst not— not now.— Gone.—
O Albert, Albert—
Alb. Tolternicus, I could not.
Tol. O, I had done't myself.
What, prince of all this mighty Brandenburg—
Alb. Prince, but not master. There is the true king.
(Pointing to the procession.)
Think me not cold. O, good Tolternicus,
I am as powerless as any boy.
Should I raise hand to stay this mortal progress,
A bull from Rome would excommunicate
And banish me forever.
My state is but a fief, and I a servant.
Rome and not Brandenburg is master here.
Tol. God, that these horrors can be!—
Alb. Must be.—
Tol. My friend,
That shared my board, sat at my studious lamp,
Partaker of my visions of a future
Glorious to man. Bartoldus, O, Bartoldus.
(The shouts of the mob echo back.)
Alb. Iron misfortune.—
Tol. Shall this e'er be changed!

Alb. Soft, you, Tolternicus. All things must change.
Tol. O, I had given my life—
Alb. There is no stemming
The fury of these strong, tempestuous times.
(A bugle sounds.)
My herald calls. Farewell, Tolternicus.
(He motions to go.)
Tol. Though it feel base I think not all on him—
Where go you weaponed, soldiered and at night?
Alb. Our wars are on again. King Christian
Of Denmark, freshly levied, presses toward
Th' Imperial lands, and Brandenburg must join
The princely armies levied to combat
The Lutheran king.
Tol. Denmark defies the Pope.
Would God, our Brandenburg did likewise.
Alb. Tolternicus, think on it should be so,
And with God's aid— all things are possible.
(He motions to his soldiers, who retire a distance.)
Long had this land been Lutheran neath me,
But that the Inquisition holds our wills
Slaves to base fear. I cannot change my faith
If the whole princedom sanction not my turning.
So to my Roman allies am I loyal.
But if the might of arms of Denmark conquers
And our poor levies are forced to a peace,
Mayhap the change will come.— Adieu. Adieu.
I go to war's uncertain arbitrament,
You to your heavenly arcana. O,
Temper your studies to these terrible times.
Your brother's hand, your uncle's holy power
And mine, can shield your unaccuséd head;
But if, as this day's doings, you go too far,
You may yet feel th' Inquisitorial fist.
Now you have acted, O, be doubly sure,
And if aught papers dangerous to your cause—
For I do know you have some works about—
Be hid within your house, find them and burn them.
This churchly power has a dangerous lease:

If war's uncertain, uncertain too is peace.

(He rides off, followed by his soldiers.)

(Tolternicus alone.)

Tol. O God in heaven.— But it is so. There is no room
In this great thankless world for honest men
That would in duty raise mankind. Bartoldus,
Where are those glowing hopes, where all our visions
That yester night swayed o'er us in our study?
O, I had hoped to see thee teach mankind,
And now— now thou art gone— yea, gone.
It is the curse of time. Man, art thou worth
That sacrifice be done to raise thee? I tremble.

(He raises his eyes to heaven.)

O stars, that wink so coolly on our sorrow,
Outfacing night and all her terrorous brood,
What is man's life?
Above, eternity looks calmly down
On our vain action.
Would God, we toiling midges of this earth
Might learn from your serenity true kindness.
Here all is strife and hurled-on pettiness;
Above—
All order, harmony and love.
There is a sermon in your myriad eyes
For our so sorely troubled souls below.
Whirl, whirl, eternal beacons— whirl your time!
Some day— some day— weak man will see and listen.

Benedict. (Without.) Tolternicus! Master! Tolternicus!

Tol. It is my servant.— Here, boy, Benedict.

(Enter Benedict with Ursula.)

Ben. O, my good master, noble Bartoldus's ta'en.—

Tol. Soft, honest Benedict.— Ursula, look not pale.

Urs. O Niclas, is it true?

Tol. Good Ursula,
Pray God there comes a time this will not be.—
Down, welling sorrow! Grief, hold till that hour
I may pour out my heavy love alone.—

They called me from my study with this news. (To Benedict.)
Have my good friends assembled? Are all come?
Ben. All are come in. I was sent out in search,
For 'twas not known whence you had gone so sudden.
Tol. Then let us on.
Urs. Stay, Niclas. What is this meeting.
That under darkest cover your learned friends
Assemble at this hour in your study?
I fear it is some danger, else your care
Had asked me hither. Had not good Benedict
Met me before my father's, seeking you,
I had not known.
Tol. Dear Ursula, fear not.
I have no secret that to God and man
I will not bare. For you, dear love, there's nothing
In God's creation, that is mine, I'll not
Share with you— (Aside.) save my danger— save my
This night, to judge my theory and writing, [danger.
I have assembled my high friends— co-equals
In our learned spheres— to make decision
Whether I'll print my volumes or whether not.
This dangerous age makes men to moral cowards,
And rather will they fear to tell their thoughts
Than speak them and be free. I am not built thus.
In me the fire of truth has flamed too strong
That I for fear of danger should keep silent.
But that a dutious love for my true friends
Urges this counsel, I had spoke out long since.
Urs. O Niclas, I fear this meeting. Let me come.
What I forebode I dare not speak in words.
Tol. Fear nothing, Ursula. I'll be myself
Though all God's lightning threaten. If it be
But simple danger to my personal,
I cannot find a moral pretext out
Why I should hide my thoughts.
Ben. It might be dang'rous—
Your coming marriage— master, should you print.
Tol. Think not of that. Ursula knows me, boy.

Nothing that I can do will change our love.
Urs. O Niclas, will you print, surrounded thus
With terrible dangers, when the noble Bartoldus,
For but a trifle of your bolder views—
My fears grow— I feel a terrible omen.—
O Niclas, will you print?
Tol. Let us wait, dear.
Urs. O, will you print?
Tol. I know not, Ursula,
But know that I will do what conscience orders.
Things will be told when the full heart says yea,
Though all man's weaker wisdom counsel nay.
Let's on together, for our friends wait still.
(As they are about to go off, Tolternicus pauses in thought.)
Tol. Speak to me then, Bartoldus, speak to me.
If spirits have power to counsel and defend
Then, should I need, in heaven I have a friend.
(Exunt.)

ACT I,

SCENE 2.

(The library of Tolternicus. To the left of the audience is a balcony window looking out on the stars. Tolternicus, Ursula, Campeggio, Bernard, Benedict and Andreas.)
Tol. But, dearest Ursula, hear my full side.
Urs. O Niclas, you do not love me.
(She goes off weeping.)
Tol. Back, bitter grief! I would fain weep with you,
For you have all my heart, though you say no.
This is the first that e'er did come between us.
Comfort her, Benedict.
(Exit Benedict.)
I never knew
Her heart so overflowed with anxious love
As these hot tears, these pleading adjurations,

Bare to my soul.

Ber. O, Ursula is right.
See it, Niclas. O, see it. Her mind forebodes
But what our pondered reason sees for true.
To print these volumes, publish these strange theories—
For they are strange, defend them how you will—
In such a day as this, when every whisper
Spells heresy, spells the destroying stake,
It were to beard the lion— O, good Niclas,
To do this deed— Why, Niclas, friend, my friend—
To do this deed—

Tol. You understand me not.
Ursula loves, and 'tis her love that moves,
Though in her heart she knows that I am right.
But you— you do not guess— you do not fathom—

And. My brother, hear me. When you were but a boy
And danced upon our tender mother's knee,
One day there came a hand upon her shoulder,
And looking up, our Heavenly Father seemed there.
He touched your forehead and these words spake out:
"This is my loved one.", whereat our mother, frightened,
Leaped up, and the Great Spirit was gone.
This has she told us in her pious hour
And will not hear my earnest contradiction.
I cannot help but fear it was the devil;
For, trusting in that word, our tender mother
Guarded your youth as were you God's own jewel;
As you grew up, gave you the ablest tutors,
Sent you to Padua, Bologna, Florence,
Paris and Rome, there to become a man,
Not dreaming that her care but fostered this
Your curious study of the forbidden stars,
Not dreaming that her son would scoff all law
As God defined it in our Holy Book,
And with false vagaries defy high heaven
In such great madness as these tomes contain.

Rhet. (Aside.) This man should knead at dough and [is a bishop.

Tol. Andreas, brother—

And. For our dear mother's sake,

That her gray hairs sink not in grief to the grave,
Print not these volumes. Throw them in the fire.
They are the devil's work and will prove flame.

Camp. O nephew, Niclas, I tended you from childhood,
Heard your confession from my sister's knee;
Now in mine age, by that advice I gave you,
Wherein your youth did profit and bring fruit,
I say: Print not these volumes. Print them not.
Hark to my aged counsel. None loves you more.

Tol. Uncle, let me repeat, 'tis with respect
And humble veneration for your goodness
I have withheld so long. Now comes the time,
At last,
And my o'erflowing nature cannot hold
This secret more. Ten laborous years I toiled,
Ten laborous years— and from my quiet study
Gazed on the stars, perfecting what I knew.
Here is the fruit. To tell it, is a danger,
But to keep silent, worse— is death.
I am persuaded that no mortal man
Can by pure argument refute my work,
And know that none before me has succeeded
As I, in laying bare the mighty laws
Our whirling universe obeys and orders.
Though mankind like it not, though I be charged
With heresy, with blasphemy and devils,
It is my God-given duty to make this known.
There stands high Rheticus— no man more honored
In the four worlds for knowledge of the heavens—
Let him speak out if I o'erboast my words.

And. You ne'er were given to boasting, but ever were
A mad-head and a fool.

Tol. Soft, brother,
'Tis as you see it.

Ber. We see it as it is.

Tol. Speak, Rheticus. Defend me from my friends.
I can myself take issue with all others.

Rhet. Bishop Campeggio, good Father Andreas,
And you, kind, honest Bernard,

I know you mean it best for my dear friend.
I do not urge him for his private gain
To print these volumes, nor can I warn him,
As you have done, to shield him from all harm.
(He pauses.)
This file of pages, given to the world,
(He points to the manuscript.)
Will prove a greater organ of upliftment
Than all the tomes from Ptolemy till to-day.
Here is the essence that, let loose on men,
Will run like fire to the bounds of the earth,
Kindle men's hearts with a titanic truth,
And battling with the never-failing lie,
Give God back to his Man in purer spirit.
I urge because I love truth as my God.
I know, Tolternicus has found out that
The world two thousand years has sought in vain.
Therefore I counsel, and Tolternicus knows
I speak but what I'd do had I learned likewise.

Ber. O, easy is this counsel. Remember, sir,
Should Niclas burn for it, you may burn too.

Rhet. I would burn willingly to see this work
Spread in a thousand books from Rome to Denmark.

Ber. Denmark is where you'll be, then— not in Rome.

Tol. Offend not, Bernard. Rheticus speaks true,
And offers me his long and hard-saved fortune
Down to a penny to put this work in print.
If it should ruin, Rheticus will feel it.

Ber. You do not think on Ursula, Niclas.
Her you have loved— Hear me.— her you now hope
Soon to beg as a bride of her stern father.
O, if you print these works 'twill ruin her life,
Cast shame upon her love, mayhap bring death
In implication of your life-long friendship.

Tol. If it should all be thus!—

Ber. O, can you waver?
Niclas, hear us— your friends— us, your true friends.
Let me remind you— O, at this same hour—
This very hour we stand urging thus—

The crackling fagot grinds our friend, Bartoldus,
For but the fraction of your darker fault.—
What, Niclas, Niclas, think on the event.—
Death! Fire! Torture! Burning! Fire! Death!
And your so happy-featured life all ruined.
O, can not you look on her sister's love,
Plan as do we a peaceful, happy life,—
But you must be outspreading dangerous wings
And flying like a moth into the fire.
(All look on Tolternicus, who, in agitation, walks away a few paces, his hands clasped behind him.)
Have you your wits? O Niclas, madman!—
All shows the danger— all.

Tol. Speak not of danger. I do not know the word.
Paint better reasons why I should not print,
Or, by the holy God! I'll do my will
Though all the heavens tumble.

Ber. , Then think of her.

Tol. I think of her, Bernard— her most of all.
Good God! do you think I forget her— her
My life's hope— my only happiness— my jewel?

Ber. O, she is made to be a blessed queen
Unto a prince.
I fain would think you have no love at all
Not to appraise her better.

Tol. Who in God's world knows Ursula as I?

Ber. And will you throw her off as nought— as a
Mere trifle— for the printing of a work,
That will but strew the seeds of heresy
Into the fertile of these frightful times,
Cause blood to flow where now is happiness,
And turn the blessings of our stable order
Into one vortex of distressful war.

Tol. Bernard, I am not iron, but when I'm hammered.
Leave me, good friends, and let me think alone.

And. The truth is plain. There is no need to think.
O, you will be the death of all of us!

Tol. Are you so swift? O brother, were you I;
Had you my pulse, my vision, my resolve;

O, were these eyes implanted in your soul,
You'd now be moved for me with such a passion
As would cry out to all the world: "Defy!"
And. Defy.— Rash ape!— Defy.— I'll hear no more.—
Defy. O fool! O madman! I am done.
(He moves angrily off.)
Tol. Stay, Andreas.
And. Go to your death. Print! Print!
Throw yourself to the fire. Print!
Let all the devils of hell loose all at once,
Hurl down shame on your mother and our house.
I will renounce you. I will wash my hands.
(He goes out.)
Camp. Good Niclas, hear him.
Tol. Uncle Campeggio,
My brother's temper is even as my own
With but a changed direction. If I do set
My will— But no.— Let me commune alone.
Camp. Niclas, you see me now, a weak old man.
Father I've been to you— you son to me,
And if at last you set this plan a'foot
'Twill be my duty— my life's last duty
To travel to Rome, old as I am, and beg
Your life— beg your eternal pardon.
Ber. You'd go to Rome!
Camp. Better I go to Rome and intercede
Than that this reaches Leo from mouth opposed.
O, I would plead for you— In my gray hairs
Would I beseech his pardon. Look on me, Niclas.
I am old— old.
I watched you growing to the ranks of man,
Upright and noble.— Now, O now I tremble.—
Hurl not upon us such a heresy.
O, terrible it is to tempt God's wrath,
And His remorseless anger comes in lightning.
Ber. Think on Bartoldus. Think on mad Bartoldus,
That is now gone— if blessed— gone to God.
O, could I conjure souls, I'd cry to heaven
(He points to the window.)

And from that window call Bartoldus down
To tell thee thou art mad.— Think on Bartoldus.
Tol. O Bernard,— but leave me. I would decide alone.
Ber. Will you decide with reason and with right?
Tol. I will decide as my true nature tells,
And what, when you return, I say in answer
Stands like a rock.
Ber. Remember, O remember,
In this tipped balance hangs our future fate.
If you renounce, all will be happiness;
If you uphold, God help us— God help you.
Tol. Where much depends conscience is trusted best.
The soul is true to God in every trial.—
But leave me, leave me. I will answer then.
(All go out slowly. After the rest have gone, Campeggio still stays, looking long and sadly on Tolternicus. Then he slowly goes off also.)

(Tolternicus alone.)

Tol. Is it thus, O God, that I must struggle?
Yet there's no honest struggle in my breast.
I fear not what will come. I know the right.
And though Bartoldus for those very stars—
Those very stars that now look on my trouble,
And even but now have seen Bartoldus burn—
Gives me a warning dreadful even to thought,
I have no wish to flee his end, if fleeing,
I sacrifice God's truth.
(He is looking toward the window, through which the stars can be seen. As he continues he imperceptibly raises his hand towards them.)
My thoughts turn to Bartoldus and will not back.
O, many a night have we watched from this window,
Deep in God's vast, eternal mysteries.
I gaze on starry heavens we both gazed on;
I see the constellations we both resolved;
And there a growing comet he pointed to me
Even on the night before. Bartoldus—
Thou saidest thou wouldst come should I e'er need thee.
'Twas but thy earnest love in last farewell,

And nevermore can I hope to behold
Thy form again, or hear thy earnest praise.
(He pauses.)
I have heard that men in desperate need of council
Have called on their fond dead, or in their dreams
Invoked the Absolute to send them aid,
The which— so run these tales— often is granted,
And counsel given, no earth-born could have made.
Yet I have held— in duty to my learning—
Such thoughts but visionary, and the tales
Gossip as idle as a granddam's story.
I am no visionary of this stamp,
And yet, if there were time that man more needed
O'erhuman aid, that time is now, and I
That man.
O, were it in my power to speak the dead—
Could I now have my wish, it were kind God
Would let Bartoldus come, commune with me,
Console me in this hour;
And I would ask his spirit to tell me true
If I now act with God— or truer still—
If all our earthly toil is worth its trouble.
This were a good no man could be too great
To bring down to mankind. O, I would ask—
(Tolternicus starts back from the window, his right arm raised toward it in defense.)
Be thou a devil or damned!—
(An apparation of Bartoldus has appeared before the window, outlined against the heavens, the stars being visible through it. Tolternicus stands motionless, staring at the vision.)
I dream. Earth has no instances.— But stay.
It is a spirit come back to tell things true.—
It waves! It lives!— I will demand it.—
(He takes a step forward.)
Art thou Bartoldus?
(He shudders and shrinks back.)
Terrorous night!

Vis. Tolternicus, fear not. Thou seest me risen.
High in God's heaven will I work my will.
Tol. Art thou Bartoldus?
Vis. I am Bartoldus' soul.
What wouldst thou, that thou callest?
Tol. My fears dissolve.
High vision, I am blessed to have thee near.
O, while resolve sits fresh upon my soul
Grant me a question. Tell me what I ask.
Vis. Thou askest thy friend. What I can tell, I will.
Tol. My heart, beat not so fast. Unburden.— Bartold-
Thou knowest I struggle to bring God's truth to man. [us.
Will I succeed, or is all struggle futile?
Advise me, you who can.
Bar. All has an end.
Tol. Shall I work on, perhaps to burn as thou?
Will mankind benefit, or is all vain?
Say, for I long to know.
Vis. Tolternicus,
Work on.
Blessed alone are they that strive for heaven.
Thou hast the living fire. On, for thy God!
Tol. Thou satisfiest me not. Tell me but bluntly,
If I now risk my all and am condemned
Will my work live in man? Will my work live?
Vis. Thy work will live unto the end of time.
Tol. O thanks.— Thanks, Vision.—
But if thou hast the power of prophesy,
O'ercome a petty, curious, mortal fear.
Tell me, if now I print, will I be judged,
Will I be sent unto the burning fagot
And mortal torture be my recompense?
(The vision wavers.)
Thou hast the eye to see my future fate.—
What will my end be here?— It vanishes.
(The vision melts away.)
O stay!— Bartoldus, stay!
It is forbid to tell. I care not. I
Am ready. There is a lightness in my heart

That this so friendly spirit has instilled.
God, let me on. O, I am ages younger.
Did I e'er doubt? Heaven pardon if I did.—
And if it were the devil to tempt me on
I could not go undismayed.
I doubt not but our God, who sent me this,
Meant not my harm, but if 'twere so I care not.—
I will call in them all.

(Enter Ursula.)

O Ursula—
(Aside.) But no, I'll tell it not.— Come to me, love.
Your dainty cheeks all scalded with hot tears—
And all for willful Niclas, that will on
Through heaven itself cry halt. So tender, dear.

Urs. O Niclas, let me beg forgiveness. I,
In my true breast, know that you must be right.
It is my love that makes me fearful.

Tol. So,
Then are we one again.

Urs. If this should come
As my forebodings warn, I can die too.

Tol. Ursula— But here comes in our mother.

Urs. Our mother.

(Enter Tolternicus' mother.)

Tol. Sweet, now, you mother.

M. Niclas, here is grief.
Campeggio's in tears, and Andreas
Walks up and down in rage.

Tol. Mother, 'tis true.—
They fear to let me give the world my writings—
Those writings that long nights you saw me make—
Those same you prayed for every night in bed
That God reward me, mother.

M. I do pray still.
God will uphold you, Niclas.
He has given proof in your long kindness to me,
And, I am sure, His bounty will stay still.

Tol. Sweet mother, I know it will— and for you too.
There is no anchor but our faith, mother,

And, mother, we have faith.
Urs. Ay me.
Tol. Sigh not, Ursula,
But go with mother and acquaint them all
I will give answer now.
(Exunt Ursula and Tolternicus' mother.)
My storm is done.
Even with resolve the lowering heavens brighten,
And earth that was so desert now is fair.
(Enter Campeggio, Bernard and Rheticus.)
It is decided, friends, and I will print.
Campeggio, uncle, I do but what I must.
Long have I thought this step and am resolved.—
Though it be death to give my work abroad,
Though all the world do curse me and condemn,
I know that what I do is in God's name,
And I will do it, bring it what it may.
Ber. The world will crush you, tread you, trample you.
Tol. If good come of it and my work live on,
I can bear all.— Enough. Think not to change me.
I've spoken and will act.— Rheticus, my friend,
God give you thanks for your expense and pains;
Take you my works.
In Nuremberg, in quiet, print them out,
And when all's done, send me a humble copy.
(Rheticus takes the manuscript.)
Rhet. I will do so. My letters will tell all.
(He bows to all.)
Tol. Farewell, good Rheticus.
Rhet. My speed will answer back.
(Exit Rheticus.)
Camp. Niclas, I go to Rome. O now I hope
My word is stronger with our holy Church
Than with a wilful nephew.
Ber. It may be so.
'Twould be his saving— his life. 'Twould be his life.
Camp. I will beseech His Holiness in your favor,
God be my guide. Pray that this aged heart
Lasts out its travel, and my living tongue

Bring back the pardon that my weakness begs.
Tol. Though I would stop you, yet I know 'tis futile.
God thank you, Uncle. This will end happy yet.
I have all confidence where I am right.
Ber. (Aside.) And I all— fear.
(Campeggio and Tolternicus embrace in silence. Then Campeggio, his head bowed, slowly leaves the room.)
(As he goes, Ursula reenters.)
Urs. Niclas, the night is late, and my wrought mind
Seems in a different world since this eve's going.
Tol. Come, Ursula, now we are nearer still.
To-morrow will I come before your father
And ask this blessed hand. Long have I waited,
Long has he held me off with frowning mien,
But though he have not changed, I feel within me
There is a soundness in my breast to-night
Henceforth will bear me on.
Urs. That he will give consent, I know unasked.
Tol. Then will I speak him doubly sure to-morrow.
Urs. You cannot. He is gone these three days past,
And will not back again the next two months.
Tol. Let it be then. Meanwhile my works will print.
And if I have the pages in my hand
On that same day I take you to my wife,
Our joy will double.
(Shouts without.)
What are those shouts? Hark!
(Shouts again.)
Ber. It is the crowd, returnéd from the burning.
Heaven help Bartoldus.
(The shouts are heard diminishing into the distance.)
(Ursula looks, frightened, at Tolternicus.)
Ber. I take no joy in this day's doings, Niclas.
(Enter Benedict.)
Tol. Fear not for me, Bernard.— Good Benedict, boy.
Ben. 'Tis done. He stood his strength as the flames rose,
And not one murmur gave in answer.
Tol. Then art thou gone. Gone. Gone.
And art eternal.

Ben. Dead and burned.— Burned.
Ber. Saw you him, Benedict?
Ben. I did not go,
But coming, met a messenger from Spain
Who stayed to see the burning. He told me more.
Columbus is returned from his last voyage,
And all in chains, at the rude king's command
Is thrown in prison.
Ber. Columbus!
Ben. In chains, in prison.
Tol. Thus do they treat them all. Ursula, come.
This is a dreary night. Put we on sadness,—
Columbus in chains. Bartoldus— Bartoldus— burned.
(Exunt Tolternicus and Ursula.)
Ber. Blind madman— madman— can you not see day?
But it is done.
Ben. Mean you Tolternicus?
Ber. Until this hour I counted him most happy,
That from this day enjoys but dubious fear.
O, on the verge that he would wed a wife
He wilful takes the step that risks his life.

ACT II.

(A parlor in the house of La Roche. Dusk. The hanging lamps are being lit by a servant, who goes off.)

(Enter La Roche with Count Von Lohenstein.)

La R. Von Lohenstein, it is but yester night
That from my arduous journey I am returned,
And to your suit, would God I could say "yes",
But she, my daughter, has— how shall I say it?—

Von L. I know full well my suit comes a surprise,
And, but my father's death had not fallen late,
I had wooed long ago. 'Tis thus: my father—
Pardon my frankness— would not have me marry
Out of my rank, and I was forced to wait.
You are rich, you are cultured, but you are not titled,
And my thus taking Ursula to wife
Had reft me of my states, left me a beggar.

La R. It is too late, too late. Her heart is fettered;
On this astrologer she dotes, and will
Not hear another's name in the same breath
With his.

Von L. Then I am sorry. I love your daughter,
Would do for her what— God knows I'd do all.

La R. O noble friend, had I but known this sooner
Much might have changed. 'Twas even upon the eve
Of my departure, all anxious for my travels,
That Ursula came to me, held me tight,
And made me swear to grant Tolternicus' suit,
Which he, said, would make when I returned.
I promised.—
And but God intervenes, it shall be so.

Von L. 'Tis hard. 'Tis hard. I had not looked for this.

La R. I had not given consent to let her wed
This student of the stars, but for her pressing.
He is a visionary, and though stout-hearted—
For braver man no kingly head e'er knighted—

I fear these theorists, these lean star-gazers,
And therefore held him off these many years.
'Tis done. There is no remedy, my friend.
Few can refuse a count— few have the will—
But with that firmness that my lineage boasts
I now will put my daughter's heart above
My selfish yearnings for a title.
Von L. Hard fate.
Had I not, fearful, waited, I might have won.
La R. Take it not ill, Von Lohenstein.
Von L. O, sir,
I love too much and can take nothing ill
That in this sacred house is done or spoken.
I will go hence to bear my grief alone,
And in cold castle walls burn out my sorrow.
La R. No, see us often.
Von L. When the wound is healed
That now this parting opens, I will come back.
Farewell. I love your daughter. I'll prove your friend,
And with a humbler spirit my tasks attend.
(Exit Von Lohenstein.)
La R. It makes my heart sink thus to see him sorrow.
Well, such is life. We cannot see the future,
But in deceptive glass and with dim eye.
Had I but not said "yes", I'd not say "no".
Too swift is pity and oft proves too slow.—
He is an admirable and noble knight.
Ursula, thou losest in him the flower of gentry
And takest a dubious mate in this star-gazer.
Well, it is done.— Let me see—
(He looks about the room and sees his sword in the corner.)
(He takes it.) Ha, my old fellow!
Art thou so dead? I have wielded thee so oft
My old arm still doth itch to use thee.
(He swings it around his head.)
See, I can twirl.— I am not old— not yet.
I can twirl till the cold wind cries "a' mercy!"
(Enter a servant.)

Hang up my sword. The bloody Turk is laid
And the dark Moor.— O, in a dream I learned
That when I use thee more 'twill be upon
The death of a dear child.
Pray God, never again shall I e'er need thee.

(The servant takes the sword.)

Serv. My lord, Tolternicus is in your study.
Shall I invite him hither?

La R. I'll come to him.
Bid your good fellows set the place to rights.
All looks so small and dingy since my travel.—
Mayhap— but let that pass. Call up your fellows.

Serv. I'll do so, sir.

(Exit servant.)

La R. Though it be hard, indeed,
To give her to a student, while a count of blood
Stands at the door, refused, I must do so.
Heaven holds the key to love. Since he is worthy
And in all honorable, I will not cross.

(Exit La Roche.)

(Reenter 1st servant with others.)

1st S. What, has he writ this book? Tolternicus?

4th S. Tolternicus— he that now asks our master's daughter in marriage.

1st S. Now by St. Stanislaus! he would not make this world into a ball, hanging in space?

2nd S. Hanging to what?— that's what I want to know.

3rd S. Why, hanging from heaven. Where should he hang't from else?

4th S. It is not that— not that, and there's the mystery of it. He makes her hang from nothing. No up, no down. No heaven, no hell.— Nothing. Nothing.— Only a bare ball spinning like a watermelon rolling down hill.

3rd S. What, does he expect us to believe that?

2nd S. Ha, ha, ha!

1st S. Why, if the world be round like a ball, then we'll all fall off when night comes round and she turns over for a sleep.

2nd S. Ha, ha, ha!

4th S. But see how crafty he is. If the world turn, then there's no need of the sun galloping over God's heaven. And there he gets us, for we can't show him why the sun thus goes.

3rd S. What need we show him? He can see for himself. Any fool can see that.

4th S. Tut. He'll not believe his eyes. I have read where he says men can't believe their eyes, and then I thought: 'tis true. For when I read such things set down in a book— in letters— on paper— I can't believe my eyes either. Ha, ha, ha!

2nd S. Ha, ha, ha!

1st S. Now, heavens forbid! If he make our earth to turn, we'll all be ruined. Thus our house, now right side up, tonight is wrong side down, and we'll all spill out of our beds like peas out of a bushel.

2nd S. Ha, ha, ha!

1st S. For sure, there's nothing safe. I will chain down my bed to-night and tie myself in.

3rd S. I will tie my porridge to my soupplate and bind my liquor in his glass. For certes, I cannot have them falling into the ceiling.

2nd S. Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!

1st S. Nail down your boots or you'll find they've fallen off into space and become stars.

2nd S. I'll put my money bag under the hearthstone so that it will not fall away.

3rd S. Nay, thou fool, the hearthstone will fall away, too. Ha, ha!— God! God! What these learned men do and don't do. They spin a theory out of their heads and try to force it on us plain folk for true.— The sun stand still! The earth turn! What? Have we no eyes? Doth not the sun move? Doth not this earth stand?— Heaven help the learned! My little wit I would not trade with ten such sophisters.

(Enter a fifth servant.)

5th S. News! News! From forth the abyss of darkness overhead a comet has appeared. 'Tis big as the sun and has a tail long as a ribband.

3rd S. What, of fire?

5th S. Like a great devil. One fierce, evil eye and a trail of fire— a dragon of the heavens!

3rd S. What, of fire?

5th S. Fire. Fire.— Flaming fire.

1st S. A judgment of God!

5th S. The people stand i' the streets and stare, and howl that 'tis a judgment come from heaven for all the heresies we tolerate within our kingdom.

1st S. A judgment! A judgment!

5th S. St. Stanislaus has appeared again up in the eastern sky, with warning finger pointed at the comet, and from the boundaries it is acclaimed, the pest, that ravaged heretical Hungary, is come on again and hits our territories.

1st. S. A judgment! A judgment!

2nd S. Where will we all flee to?

1st S. It is a judgment for these heretic views, and God is wroth that we thus tolerate his sacred heaven scoffed.

2nd S.)
) A judgment! A judgment!
3rd S.)

5th S. 'Tis said they will ring the bells and blow the horns of all Europe, from Rome to Thorn, to drive away this comet.

1st S. Let's out and see.— What, with a tail?

5th S. Damnable tail.

1st S. In the twilight?

5th S. Now! Now!

2nd S. Let's out and see. If't be the world's coming to end, I want to be from under the roof.

1st S. Let's out and see.

(Exunt 1st, 2nd and 4th servants, running.)

(The 5th servant detains the 3rd.)

5th S. Brother, where's our master?

3rd S. Speaking Tolternicus in his study. Shall I go warn him?

5th S. Not now. Come near me. Hist. 'Tis winded that our good bishop, that went so sudden to Rome, is come back again with letters of damning upon Tolternicus.

3rd S. On Tolternicus?— his nephew?

5th S. Him that's now with our master and is to marry Ursula.

3rd S. What, the ban?

5th S. The ban. The holy ban. He's writ some writ-
Filthy with heresy. [ings

3rd S. Great God in heaven!
So, will he burn?

5th S. 'Tis rumored but not known.
Hist. Watch the times. Keep thine eye peeled,
Thine ear open. Things happen when they happen.

3rd S. Let us get out. I hear our master coming.

5th S. We'll out and see the comet. Mum's our que.

3rd S. I will not ope my mouth.

(Exunt 3rd and 5th servants.)

(Enter Bernard and Agnes.)

Ber. We will be married on the self-same day.
Agnes, your sister's love gives me great hope.—
Though I fear still— but will not speak it out—
This work of Niclas has done untold harm.
This morning came a copy by the courier,
And in a word, the bringer told me, thus,
Putting his finger wistful to his nose,
There's that within more dangerous than powder—
That he'd not have a tome for all God's world—
And bade me be prepared to burn it straight,
Should it be under ban.

Agn. Let us hope not.
I cannot think good Niclas so misled
As run beneath the thunder of our church.
It will be found their fears were overcharged,
And good Campeggio went hence o'erconscienced.
Mayhap this work, which thus you do condemn,

Some day will prove a blessing and be honored.
Ber. Believe it not. I have not read it well.
My eyes were made for other, better, uses
Than astral study; and his round figures,
Triangles, dots and curves, mean little to me.
But of the general purport, I am apprised,
'Tis violation of our life-long faith,
O'erthrows the heavens, makes the stars to worlds,
And shrinks our massive earth into an apple.
Agn. Let us not cloud the joy of this bright day
With gloomy warnings.— Ursula, Niclas come.
Long have they waited and their hearts are full.
(Enter Tolternicus with Ursula, Ursula leaning on his arm.)
Tol. O, thank you, holy heavens. Heavens, thanks.
That my long-asked happiness is won.
Urs. O, Niclas, I do tremble. Joy is not joy.
For now I am too happy in thy love
And the all-weighing powers may prove jealous.
Tol. Think not of them, dear sweet.— O, I am so—
I feel the whole world but a petty tool,
My hand a titan's and my will all-strong,
With thee, dear Ursula— with thee.
Agn. O, they are grown silly with happiness.
Ber. And so were we when first we knew his mind.
Agn. O, they are thousands worse, or I should blush.
Why, they are children.
Ber. Tut, dear. You know them not.
Tol. Now let no man deny, for I will say
Love is life's dearest jewel.— Dear Ursula.
(He kisses her.)
Urs. O, there are powers that do make me dread,
I am so happy.
Tol. Honey, sweet, no powers,
But love, love, love.
Urs. Then be they love;
Let them be love, for O, I am love's slave.
Tol. Sweet heavens, I cannot tell what thoughts stir
O night, I greet thee, for my joy is full. [here

Ber. Well, let us joy.
All is now past the critical.— Away!
And let us banquet in the dying day.
(Enter Benedict.)
What, Benedict, art so in haste? Hold yet.—
The twilight hardly hides the mantled blush
Upon thy master's cheek. Let it away
Ere you disturb him with a prosy message.
Ben. O master— Tolternicus—
Tol. Stay, boy. Why look
You pale? Has a new star appeared, or are
New phases in the comet and the moon,
To shame the shades of night with brilliant beacons?
O Benedict, I'm as happy as a prince.
Ben. Tolternicus, I bring no joyful news.
Tol. Then welcome. O, temper this my joy with tears,
Or I will die with gladness.
Ben. Campeggio
Is back from Rome.
(Tolternicus drops Ursula's hand.)
Tol.)
) Campeggio!
Ber.)
Ben. From Rome.—
And bids you on the instant come to him.
Tol. Bids me?—
Ber. Is he alone?
Ben. Alone, at our house,
And would see Niclas alone— and on the instant.
Tol. Gave he no further message?
Ben. None.
Tol. How does he?
Ben. He has grown old— old— I cannot tell you.—
And sits and stares before like one distract.
He will not speak to us.
Tol. He will not speak?
Ben. Nothing.—
But what is writ in his sad, hollow eyes
And trouble-furrowed visage lets me guess

There is some news of import not all good.
Tol. I will go to him. Benedict, go before.
Tell him I come.
(Exit Benedict.)
'Tis strange.— That he should be
Already back from Rome I can't believe.
But yet a horse could do it traveling eager.—
Dear Ursula, my wife-to-be, bear with me
If I desert you thus without more speech.
This must be looked to. This is strange, indeed.
Urs. Niclas, let me go with you.
Tol. Dear, 'tis not well.
Campeggio would see me— but alone.
Urs. I fear it. O, good Niclas—
Tol. No, Ursula,
Fear nothing. If the worst comes, I will know means
To turn whatever danger all to good.
Let me haste on. One kiss, and dear, I'll come
To be with you again when I have seen him.
(He goes off with a hasty step.)
Urs. Uphold us, O God. If harm should come to him—
Why let I him go?— Niclas! Niclas! Niclas!
Agn. Sister, be calm. This is ill-seeming fear.
Urs. O Agnes, I do fear more than I know.
He was not wont to tremble when he kisses me.—
There is danger— danger. Agnes— Bernard— Bernard.
O come! Come! Let us follow.
Ber. Ursula, stay.
If my fears now are true there is no going.
Tolternicus has laid his head in the noose
And cannot draw it forth lest he flee Thorn.
If he exile himself and seek the Dane,
Denmark may shelter him. Here is no staying.—
But here, in haste, comes Cajetan with news,
And your disheveled father.
(Enter Cajetan and La Roche.)
La R. This cannot be.— Tolternicus?— Tolternicus?
Caj. Tolternicus, that will be even your son.
La R. Why told they not me of this dangerous work?

Ursula! Bernard!— I had no premonition!—
What is this of Tolternicus?— If the devil—
Speak! Say! Where is Tolternicus?
Urs. Father—
La R. O, speak!
If this be true I'll bar my house to him.
No door of mine—
Urs. O father— Cajetan—
Agn. Is it then true?
Ber. Is he condemned?— I feared it.
La R. Condemned. Damnation! Condemned. O, fire [of hell!
What. Say. Look not at me like angels.— Daughter!
(Ursula seizes Cajetan's arm.)
Urs. Cajetan, O holy father, tell me— tell me.
Caj. Ursula, my daughter, fear not. For there'll be time
To remedy what's done, if't be the worst.
La R. If he has writ these writings— Kneel not, my [daughter.
I have a godly heart and know my right—
If he has writ these writings I will renounce him.
No daughter of mine.— Hell and damnation!
Have I brought up my daughters to this pass,
Have I refused the pick of all this town—
A nobleman and a knight— to give him your hand
To this astrologer, and he must turn,
All in the twinkling of a dangerous eye,
A heretic, a blasphemer and a knave!
Ber. Then 'tis as I had feared. All the world whispers,
And Niclas is condemned.—
Urs. Condemned!
Caj. No, Ursula.
News has come on from Rome of his strong writing
And orders reached me for his trial and judgment.
But that I hope he will mend all himself,
Indeed, I, too, would give up hope.
Urs. O Cajetan—
Caj. Fear not, dear Ursula. If he's in danger,
He holds the keys to bar him or release.
He is now threatened with a papal ban.

But if he quick renounce his work, recant,
And burn before the public in the market place
His heretic books, and promise on his vow
Ne'er to contrive them more, his life is pardoned.
I will see to it, for my arm goes far.
Urs. Into the conscience of an honest man
No hand but God's e'er fingers.— O Cajetan— Cajetan—
Come. Let me go to him. O, come.
Caj. Ursula,
I came here hoping he is in this house.
Ber. He's gone. He left but now at Benedict's bidding,
And at his own home speaks Campeggio.
Caj. I will despatch my guards to take him there.
'Tis better he be sheltered in our prison
Than left unto the fury of the mob,
Which even now gathers in the open streets,
Denouncing, crying vengeance.
Urs. O my God.
(Ursula walks up and down in deep emotion.)
(Then she goes to Agnes.)
Sister, come, O, come. (She throws herself on Agnes' bosom.)
Agn. No, Ursula, be brave.
There is yet time to save— there is yet time.
Urs. O, he will never do it. He will not change.
O Agnes.—
Agn. Sister—
Urs. He is not made to change.
He will defy them. O, he will defy them.
He will not change. He is not made to change.
Agn. Ursula, he will, for you— he will, for you.
Urs. O Agnes— no— no— no— he will not.
He will die— rather die— rather die.
Agn. Ursula, he must! These tears— stop it, Ursula.
For you he must recant— he will recant.
I say he will! I know it. For he must!
Ursula, in you our hope lies— in you.
You must go to him— now— at once— and beg
Upon your knees—beg, plead, implore.— He will.

Urs. You know him not. O Agnes.—
Agn. If he'll not turn.
For you, he is not worth you.— Sister, come.
This is no time for crying. Go to him— Go.
You know not what your power in this instant,
For he does love you more than all mankind.
Ber. If he should not recant!
Agn. He will! He must!
Cajetan, Bernard— Cajetan, he must!
Caj. Ursula, come you with me. You shall be there,
For you'll have power with Niclas more than I.
La R. Then let him change him quick. I'll not wait long.
Let him recant before't has gone too far.
Let him burn up his books in a bright fire,
For I'll not waver long. I'll not wait long.
Caj. We will persuade him.
La R. Do it. For I'll be firm.
Ber. 'Twould be more seemly if— if I went too.
He is my friend, and I must show my duty.
Though I do not fear this much, I love him, father,
And we must save him.
La R. Go. Go. Go.
I know my mind. He would do what he did.
If he'll not quick undo it and recant
I, too, know what to do— I, too.
(Ursula looks, frightened, at her father.)
(Cajetan, Ursula and Bernard leave.)
Agnes, call up my servant.
Agn. What will you, father?
La R. Ask me not. Call up my servant.
Agn. Will you not go?—
La R. Call up my servant, wench!
Agn. O father, if you
Go slow, all may be saved.
La R. Call up my servant.
(Exit Agnes.)
'Tis well I knew ere this had gone too far.
He'll bring a curse upon my house.— O villian!
These visionaries! It is the devil's work.

My honored name! My house! My honored name!
But for her love I'd do it on the instant.—
Let him recant.

(Enter a servant.)

Sirra, seek out Von Lohenstein.
Bid him come hither. Say— I may change my mind.

Serv. I will do so.

La R. Bid him to be in haste.
I must go hence again.

(Exit servant.)

O thankless ingrate!
This is my daughter's sir!— Thanks, thanks, heaven.
I did not think I was to serve the fiend.
Von Lohenstein shall know, ere 'tis too late,
How light this villian holds my daughter's love.—
I'll give no promise, but will hold out hope.—
This villian has power and may escape the ban.
But he must clean my name— and his. With me
It is no question of his life or death,
But that he sully not my family.
Since Ursula loves, my firmness rests with this:
If he recant, yet will I pardon him,
If he refuse— then never! Never! Never!

ACT III.

(Tolternicus' study, the same scene as in Act I, scene 2.)

(Enter Campeggio and Tolternicus.)

Tol. What is release, what is my earthly freedom,
If I desert God's truth? I have but writ
What from my study I do know is true.

(He draws aside the curtains of the balcony window.)

Look out upon those heavens.— See, see— the stars.
O, I have studied in the depths of night,
Loved them, nay, worshipped them— and they are mine
By every holy bond. I cannot tell
What passions, what intents, what loving mem'ries,
Center in those same stars. O uncle,
Here at this window— but no, I'll tell it not.

(He turns again to Campeggio.)

Have I for my deep love discovered what
No mortal man dared think of our high heavens,
Only to cast it off by crass rejection,
And damn God's truth with a base, human mouth?
Are not those heavens what I know they are?
Can I deny them?

Camp. Ours is not to weigh.
He has adjudged you and 'tis yours to bend.

Tol. I was not made to bend when I am right,
And though it be our highest Pope himself,
It is too much to suffer.

Camp. O, this is groundless, Niclas. In the red youth,
Your path not covered half, your joy— the future,
Here in God's blessed world, to draw this pall
Upon you, Niclas— Niclas— My sister's son—

Tol. Good Uncle, you have done what none else had.
Too well I know— too well— the dark sky o'er me.
Think not I lightly hold this fearful summons.
I saw Bartoldus torn out from our midst,
And in my mind beheld myself thus riven,

Before I did the deed. Now 'tis too late.
My course demands I still support my writings
Though all the world hurl anger, pain and death.

Camp. But why— why suffer, if your works are true?
Truth will live on though all the world condemn,
And not our ban, not our deleting fagot,
Can stir the heavens one jot if you speak true.
It is but caution, if you trust your truth,
To bend and save your person. Truth saves itself.

Tol. Though truth would live if I said yes or no,
I have no will to change what I know true.
My work and I are one. What I have printed
That in my soul lies deep and will not out.
If I deny my work I damn myself;
My work is but the shadow of my being.

Camp. Then will it be proclaimed. I cannot save you.
My power is gone. 'Tis but kind words I give.
They'll drag you forth to meet the high Tribunal.
In face of all, with this doomed work upon you
Will you be tried. I have pleaded. I have begged.
'Tis yours to save— I can do nothing more.

(Enter Bernard, Ursula and Cajetan.)

Ber. Niclas, my friend, we know and have come hither.
You will not— O, you must not, push this more.
(Ursula comes to the arms of Tolternicus, who draws her to him.)

Camp. Now plead, O, beg him, for he'll hear not me.
The time was I had hoped he loved me more.
Now I am palsied and go to my grave—

Tol. Campeggio, Uncle, 'tis not for fault of love
I turn from you. God knows, I hold you dear.
This is a deed that none but I can answer,
And none but I shall speak what I shall do.

Ber. Are you so settled? What is Ursula?—
Have you no heart? She must give answer too.—
This cannot be. Niclas, for love of God,
Can you not bend, can you not say a word—
A word— a word—
To save your life— to save your loving bride?

Tol. If that word be a lie, and my thus bending
Undo the heaven-parted truth— I cannot.
Ber. You cannot?
Tol. I cannot.
Ber. O, this is madness— madness!
Look on the world. Do you not joy to live?
Have you no fondness for felicity?
That man is mad, who, standing in God's sun,
Cannot enjoy and be content to live.
Man is not born to struggle with his temper.
God made us to enjoy his earthly heaven—
Made wife for man and man for loving wife—
And every herb that grows and every tree,
Each animal and bird are but our servants.
What is this world but one great cage of life,
And we— we to live out our time enjoying.
(He pauses. All look toward Tolternicus.)
You learn a quibble and would lend your life
Defending it. Are you of flesh? Have you
No nerves within you that do long for living?
O terrible, to chase the shadow of a cloud,
When all God's glories must glide by unseen!
Tol. You do not know me, Bernard—
Ber. I know too well,
What holds you? 'Tis a word, a tiny word.
What holds you?— You are free.
Tol. Free!— O, free!
(Tolternicus buries his face on Ursula's shoulder.)
Ber. There is no power can save the desperate soul
Determined on destruction. 'Tis in the will.
If you would live, for all your saying no,
You are free to choose your fate as God.
Here stands the way. O, you should thank our Father
You are so fortunate, and not like Bartoldus
Are reft unto the flames without more words.
You have done violence on our high creed.
The Pope has given you choice of your own end.
O, if you turn away this chance— 'tis madness.
Urs. Niclas— O God, Niclas, think of our marriage.

Tol. This too, ye heavens— this too.
Ber. Are you a man?
Can you not see 'twill kill her? It will kill her!
Tol. Almighty God, O, cloud not now my vision,
I see the right though all the world see wrong.
Urs. O, better we had not been born. (Her voice
Ber. Let him receant! [breaks.)
Urs. In God's name, Niclas—
Ber. Let him recant!
Urs. O Niclas. (She clings more tightly to him.)
(Enter La Roche.)
Caj. Her father!
Ber. La Roche.—
La R. So ho! And is it thus?
(He walks up to Tolternicus and Ursula.)
Tolternicus, I gave my daughter to a man,
Not to a heretic.—
(He separates them.)
Tol. La Roche—
Caj. O friends,
This is unseemly division.
La R. Let him hold off,
And learn how't feels to find my hand between.—
Tolternicus, I held you for a friend.
I looked upon you as a gentleman.
To you I trusted— God, I trusted all.—
My daughter— my treasure— my tender daughter—
Her I have reared to be the city's queen—
Her that the richest noble in this country
Wooes and demands— I trusted you with all.
Tol. You have no need to rue that trust, La Roche.
La R. Infamous damnation! But soft. I will be calm.
'Twas but this day Von Lohenstein did beg
My daughter's hand in marriage. I told him no.
For I did think you worthy of the place
Her tender heart reserved. What have you done?—
Stalked in upon my gracious confidence—
A snake within the garden of my love—
And poisoned with shame the affection I tendered you.

Tol. O friend, La Roche.— No tongue but yours e'er
I have shamed anyone. If it be shame [whispered
To do the things God counsels in our breasts,
If it be shame t'uncover to mankind
The truths of our eternal universe,
That mankind may behold God's native wonders
True, as they are; if it be shame to live
Chaste and apart the joyous years of youth—
When others revel in the rose of life—
In studious study of the eternal stars,
And then to brave the dangers of Inquisition
By telling of these labors and their fruits—
If this be shame, then I am worthy censure,
But if't be not, then you do do me wrong.

La R. Are you the fiend? These words are blasphemy.—
And false! False! Has not our Church condemned?
Do you appeal to honor? O, by great God!
I would proclaim you are not fit to live,
Or ere you should uphold your wicked labors
With blasphemous talk of their divinity.

Tol. Heaven help me then— But so, I have misjudged.
O bitter disenchantment!— bitterer still
To find thee in our nearest and our loved!

(Enter Benedict.)

Ben. Tolternicus, master. The streets are full,
And your name bandied in the firey crowd.
Men shake their heads and gaze upon the comet,
And some cry "Pest!" and others "Heretic!",
And, as I look, armed soldiers stand about,
Guarding our entrance.

(Shouts without.)

Caj. The soldiers are mine.
Fear nothing, Niclas. I'll see you have fair trial,
And though all Thorn rise up in arms against me.

Camp. Let us prevail. O Niclas, be our friend—

(Tolternicus walks up and down in great agitation.)

Urs. O father, plead with him— O father, plead.

La R. Plead!— O ye gods! There was no pleading
When in high tones of self-sufficing firmness [then

I gave Von Lohenstein my final word.
He begged me like a knight and I refused.—
And would you have me beggar to this boy—
This boy that has defiled our sacred scriptures,
Brought down the terrors of the Inquisition
Within our very house?
Shall I down on my knees to save a willful
That will not save himself?— No, by great God!
But I will lay the law in his own hands
And let him make his answer.

(Enter a guard.)

Caj. It is my guard. What bring you, sirra?

Guard. O, sir,
The mob is waxing wild. We cannot hold them.
They cry: "Tolternicus will fly to Denmark,",
And threaten to break down the doors and enter,
Lest he be brought to prison.

(Cries without.)

Caj. Is it thus far?

(Enter a second guard.)

2nd G. O sir, their temper's desperate. They cry:
"The comet!" and "The pest!" and drive us back.
We cannot hold them.

Caj. Go. I'll come myself.
They fear me and will back when I command.

(Exunt guards, followed by Benedict and Bernard.)

But stay.— Campeggio, come you with me.
Your old white hairs have comforted them many.

Camp. If my weak age.— (He moves toward the door.)

Caj. La Roche, all lies with you. Turn to Tolternicus.
Bid him recant. Show him your daughter's meaning.
Tell him he cannot let his life be lost.
In yet a day's short space he will be called
Before our High Tribunal of Inquisition,
Where accusation waits and his recantment
Is asked in return. If he recant, and swear,
On oath most solemn and by God most high,
Ne'er to return again to his wrong writing—
And in the public square burn his false books—

He is absolved. Our Head has sent him pardon
With the same bull that thunders him to death.
He will not hear our proffers. Ask him you,
For you hold that no jewel is dearer to him.

La R. O, let him do our will, or he will feel it.

Caj. Tolternicus, be quick. Make your decision,
For we would bring you safe unto the prison.

(Cries repeated without.)

The mob grows desperate. We will appease it.
But be in haste, for we'll not hold it long.

(Exunt Cajetan and Campeggio.)

La R. Let me be brief. Tolternicus,
Were this my choice I would not parley long,
But with immediate word would give my daughter
To one that loves her still at her true sum.
Since I well know my daughter loves you truly,
I will crush down my anger— live down the shame
That your recanted marriage will bring on,
If you now do my will.—
Hark to my words, for I'll not speak again.

(He pauses.)

You stand beneath the ban of our high Church,
And means to free you lie within your power.
If I did think you would recant and burn
Your heretic books, I would not warn you more.
But I do know your will is set against,
And you'll seek means far other for your pardon.

Tol. Let them be other.— O God, I will do all.

La R. Nor here, nor there. You must recant— recant!
If you should save your life by any trick
You will not change my will. I am resolved
You shall recant, and lift this blighting stain
From off my house— from off my spotless name,
Or, by the lord! though you'd turn king of Denmark
You shall not have my girl.

Tol. Hear me, La Roche—

La R. Recant! Recant! Or by the holy Pyx!
I'll break this bond with bitterest joy.

Tol. La Roche—
La R. No word! I've spoken! Choose.
(He goes off.)
Urs. Niclas, O God—
Tol. Ursula, we are doomed.
No tears can change our fate, therefore weep not.
Urs. O Niclas, let us judge this calm.
Tol. Calm, dear— aye calm— for it may be— the last.
Urs. O no! No! No! No! No!
Tol. Ursula, the hand of God is on our love.
My fated course is now beyond my power.
Lest Providence come between, I must be lost.
Urs. O Niclas, for our sake, no! For our sake, no!
Tol. God has great mercy, but I see no cause
Why in this terrible storm I should not sink.
The strongest vessel built is but the weakest
When the rough elements decree its doom.
I am a wave-tossed bark.
The Scylla of my course is my recantment—
For then my inward God is lost for good.—
The Charybdis— it is this fatal end.
Urs. O Niclas—
Tol. Ursula, come to this window, for now I feel
I can pour out my soul with none else by.—
(He pulls the curtains of the balcony window farther aside.)
Here by this balcony have I watched through
The long and silent hours of the night,
Revolving thoughts the world has need to know.
O, from this window did I first see day,
And on those heavens gazing, drank in the stars
And their mellifluous glow. And oft I murmured,
When, as a child, my yearning heart went out,
That if God called me to his glorious clouds
'Tis through this window that my soul would soar.
There stood the angels when my feverish couch
Rolled neath my sleeping vision the land to come.
O, if God chose to tell me his great truths,
Here were they told. Here was my soul upborne.

And when Bartoldus died— But let that be.
O Ursula, you know not what it is to love
The stars of heaven in their titanic kind.
I could kneel down before this sky and die.

(Enter Benedict.)

Ben. Your mother, Niclas, sends for you.

Tol. My mother?—

Ben. She has been troubled by the terrible cries
That come from the street without.

Tol. Does she know—

Ben. Nothing.
I have assured her 'tis the people's cry
To drive the firey comet from out the heavens,
And she is satisfied, but asks you come,
For she is lonely and would have you read
A passage from Our Saviour ere she sleeps.

(Tolternicus paces up and down.)

Tol. O God, hast Thou no mercy?— If I should see her
My tears would tell her all.

Ben. Then do not come.
I would not for the world see her in grief.
All may be settled well by morning.

Tol. Tell her— Excuse me, Benedict.— Not now.
Tell her to pray for me on my bible.

(Exit Benedict.)

Ursula, persuade me not. Let me
Struggle alone. I am a prisoner here;
In yet an hour I'll be a prisoner hence.
But ere I leave this room my fate is sealed.
Leave me for a short time. I must be now
Alone with my God— alone— alone.

Urs. If you now die, I have no more on earth.
O, let me stay. Let me bring comfort.

Tol. There is a time when even the dearest loved
Cannot bring comfort to the struggling breast,
And it must battle alone. Leave me, Ursula.

Urs. O Niclas— Niclas.—

Tol. What I will do I know not. Let me struggle.
If I'll recant my heart will tell me so.

If I refuse— the stars.
(He points towards the heavens beyond the balcony window.)
Go, Ursula.
(Ursula stands a moment, looking at Tolternicus; then, her face expressing deep anguish, slowly goes off.)
(Tolternicus alone.)
Tol. In yet an hour— an hour.
Think they me weak? Think they I'll waver?
O, I was born to break myself on stars!
(His eyes fall on the two candles that burn on the table.)
Out petty fires! There burn th' eternal lamps
That make my day my night. my night my day.
(He quenches the candles. The starlight falls in through the balcony window.)
Burn, O my beacons, burn.
I can see best to do by thy pure light
My mortal battle.
There comes a time in every higher course
When to move on means ruin, to stay means death.
That hour has come.
O should my righteous spirit desert me now
Then I am lost forever.
O heaven. O Infinite, send me down strength.
Now comes that power of man to choose his way
When the All-giver of ways shows us not one,
But two, and lets us choose. Tolternicus.
Better hadst thou been born the meanest slave
Than blunder at this hour. Better hadst not
Been born, better hadst died, than now choose wrong.
(He pauses.)
Here is the parting of thy earthly journey—
There lies the way to safety— there it lies.
One word, one nod, and my doomed head is free.
O, should I take this base infernal step
That my weak body feel not hellish tortures?
I fear not death.
No! No! Look on me, God. I fear not.
'Tis not low longing to protract my joy—

Rather rebellion to the base design
That would hurl in the dust th'eternal truth.
Trample the spotless honor of thy law,
And with fanatic shout cry down our order
That struggles with me now.—
My eyes have seen. Can I deny? Deny!
O, then are words at last but vap'rous breath.
If with a servile word I can unsay
Th'eternal truths of God. I'll-starred Tolternicus!
O, thou art made if lost and lost if made,
While God's eternal truth stands open.
(He pauses again. Then he begins more passionately.)
O life. O Ursula.—

(He kneels.)

Father, in heaven,
If I denounce myself and speak to live,
In Thine eye and mine own I stand condemned,
And the good cause I serve for long is doomed;
If I uphold and stand, her life is ruined.
Is it my duty to mankind or her?—
Life, thou art tangible.
We know thee by our every living hour.
But, O great Truth, O never-changing Real,
That is our essence and our onward force,
Thou art not of our sense and seemest small
When our fleshed houses lie in danger.

(He begins to pace the room.)

I will choose ere madness comes. I will choose.
Which way? Which way? God! God! Which way?
That way lies life. That way lies death. O, choose!
I cannot.— O, I cannot.— O, I must.
Then be't for life, for life is living still.
And much can mend if there be time for penance.

(His agitation increases.)

O my soul, I am renegade. I am not worth
That I should live for penance. I will not live.
Then death, for death solves all.— O God.
Now comes Bartoldus back into my mind,
Who that last day, when I determined my course,

Appeared in spirit before and bade me on.
O holy window, hast thou no spirit now?
(Three veiled visions appear before Tolternicus in the balcony window, outlined against the stars, which are visible through them.)
Heavenly great!
(The visions motion to Tolternicus.)
What art thou that at this hour
Comest to tempt me, desperate as I am?
Stay. Speak.
If thou beest spirit as I have seen before
O, counsel me.
Vis. Tolternicus of Thorn. Tolternicus.
Tol. Ye name me. Here I stand, a pain-racked
Desperate man. If thou art he that came—
When in my first ta'en struggle I did call—
And bade me on my way, O tell me, say.
What would you bid me now?
Vis. Tolternicus.
Tol. Say on.
I am no vain believer in dark spirits.
If there be heaven, if there be voiceless God.
Thou art not sent malignant.
(The central figure comes forward.)
Art thou Bartoldus?
Cent. F. Bartoldus is to be. We are.
Tol. O, wherefore mock you me?
Cent. F. Tolternicus, look on our naked face,
That never mortal eye but thine may see.
(The central figure unveils itself and stands in the shape of Ptolemy of Egypt.)
Tol. O Ptolemy! Greatest astronomer!
Immortal Ptolemy, I have o'erthrown thy work.
What terrible revenge wilt thou attain?
Cent. F. That thou shalt do as I.
(The vision moves as if to be off.)
Tol. Stay, Vision.
Dost thou befriend me in my terrible trial.
Then am I happy still.

Cent. F. Immortal Tolternicus.
Tol. Wherefore immortal?
Cent. F. Whate'er thou dost, desert not thy high office.
We, of the World Eternal, do bid thee on.
(The visions melt away.)
Tol. Stay! Stay!
(He reaches forward.)
O God, this is Thy infinite power.
Back, faceless terrors! Did I e'er tremble? Back!
I have been faithful to my God-given trust;
Though death stand 'fore me I'll be faithful still.
(He turns.)
Friends! Ursula! Benedict! Bernard!—
O God, with them the world comes back again.
(The visions reappear.)
Vis. Tolternicus of Thorn.
Tol. I hear thee—
(The visions vanish.)
O,
Weak and unstable man, thou needest this spirit.
(From behind, Tolternicus' mother calls. The light from her candle can be seen flashing in, before she has entered.)
M. (Calls.) Niclas.
Tol. Mother.
(The visions appear once more.)
Vis. Tolternicus.
Tol. O God!
(The visions dissolve.)
(Enter Tolternicus' mother. In her hand she bears a lighted candle.)
M. Art thou thus in the dark, Niclas?
Tol. No, mother, the light streams in.
M. The candles are all out.
Tol. Heaven's lights burn still. See, mother, the stars.
M. Ah, Niclas, the stars, God made the stars for thee,
And thee, Niclas, for the stars.
Tol. There is no purer guidance, mother.
Rather the stars should lead me than—(Aside.) O God!—

M. I know not why, Niclas, but on this night
I feel not as I should, and something whispers
All is not well.
Tol. All is well, mother.
God doth not sleep, though we oft fondly think so.
M. Niclas, on such a night thou sawest the world.
Tol. What makes thee think on that?
M. The stars, Niclas,
The stars shone thus— the air— the air was thus.
I do remember it, to-night, as were't
Thy day.— How the years fly.—
Tol. Mother— kiss me—
Good night.
M. Good night, Niclas. Heaven knows thy heart.
Thou art a dutious son in my old age.
When wilt thou wake me in the morning?
Tol. Rest, mother. Morning will come.
(He kisses her.)
And I will pray for thee when thou sleepest.
(Tolternicus' mother slowly goes off. When she reaches the door and is about to go out she looks again upon Tolternicus, who has been gazing mutely upon her. A smile of endearment brightens her face. Tolternicus returns it. Then she closes the door.)
Tol. Mother, good night. Good night my earthly hopes.
Good night my love, my all— good night.
O mother, mother, mother—
(He kneels on both knees and buries his face in his hands. After a pause, during which he has shaken violently with sobs, he raises his head.)
Should I for a bare truth give up my all?
Is the world worthy such a sacrifice?
O, I could curse this sordid generation
That with cold tooth rewards its earnest lifters.
(He prays.)
Almighty Father, that seest and understandest,
Hear my prayer.
If there be man, given with thy Godly fire,
Languished within the mazes of this earth,

Where'er he struggle, lend him heavenly strength.
Uphold him to defy the power of man
That into nothingness would crush his effort.
If to our elements I bring one spark
Of Thy eternal Being, lead me on.
My body's death will seal my prayer. Amen.

(Enter Ursula.)

Urs. Niclas, you called.

Tol. Aye, called, and heaven heard.

(He rises.)

Ursula, come to me. Come.

Urs. Niclas.—

Tol. I will not budge. I will not stir.
I am resolved.— Ursula, I am resolved.—
Let them come. Let them come. They killed Bartoldus;
Let them kill me.

(Ursula is about to speak when he interrupts her.)

In yet an instant they will seize me.— Ursula,
You are the only being on earth, save God,
I can now trust. They will accuse and damn me,
And from their prison send me to the flames.

(Ursula throws herself on his breast.)

Not now, dear Ursula. Weep me not— not now.
I hear them coming. Listen. If they should torture
I know not what mad words they'll wring from me.
Perhaps, my senses gone, and pain victorious,
I may be forced to break my word to God
And neath their hellish tortures recant my truth.
This must not be.
Find out one Angelo, my Roman friend.
He is a chemist. With him I made a vow—
Both laboring under dread of hourly danger—
That who falls first beneath the Inquisition
The other will find means to send him aid.
Tell him to send me— poison— a deadly cubus—
And if the worst comes, that will be my end.

Urs. O, is it come to this!

Tol. Bring me the cubus at my trial. You will

Find means to give it me.
(She attempts to speak.)
Be still. They come.
This is my last request, and you will do it.
(Enter Bernard, Campeggio, Cajetan, La Roche and Benedict.)
Ber. What is his mind?
Camp. O Niclas, I have prayed.—
Pray God, my prayer is heard and you are won.
Tol. Uncle, I, too, have prayed—
Camp. Thank heaven. And you
Will now come back to God and do this penance.
Tol. I am decided—
Camp. Say these are perjured writings,
Inspired of the devil,
Meant for th'eternal damning of mankind,
And thou art come t'unswear them and be true.
Tol. O, rather would I spit in God's own face
Than swear to such a lie.
Camp. Thou wilt not!
Ber. Niclas!
Then you will be condemned. Condemned! Condemned!
Tol. I am prepared. God knows it. I am prepared.
Ber. The people cry. Without, the multitude
Howls for your life. Howls for your blood— your blood.
Tol. If but the world knows all I am content.
Ber. The world will rise against you, curse you, burn
Tol. I will defy the world for the world's good. [you.
Camp. Is it thus spoken? Then heaven help you more.
Tolternicus, by all that love I bear you,
It is my duty to lead you to your trial.
Tol. It is your duty, uncle. Here is my hand.
Caj. What, ho! Guards!— Within!
(Enter armed guards.)
There is your prisoner.
Take him as I direct, and by your heads!
If any harm come to him ere his trial
I'll hang the damnéd last of you as high
As my top turret on the battlements.

1st G. We'll guard him well.
Caj. Away! And mark my words,
For by the lord! I'll do it— every one.
1st G. Fear not us. We are sending the multitude home.
The streets will soon be empty. We'll guard him well.
Caj. The trial!—
(The guards lay hold on Tolternicus.)
Urs. Will they thus take you? O,
Let them take me. Let them take me.
(She goes toward Tolternicus.)
La R.)
) Ursula—
Ber.)
Urs. I cannot live. I will die too.
La R. Ursula!
(He holds her.)
Urs. (Struggling.) If he is taken I will go mad,
Beat out my brains, leap from the dizzy tower
And hurl my worthless body in the flood.
Ber. Ursula, these are but wild and senseless words.
La R. Calm thee! Calm thee!
Urs. O father— father.—
(The guards lead Tolternicus toward the door.)
Will they? No! No! Let me, father. (She struggles.)
La R. Ursula!
(Seeing herself helpless, Ursula takes a step backward and stands in an attitude of defiance.)
Urs. Then take him! Take him! Hide him in a dung-
Deeper than hell, but I will break the bars [eon
With my weak hands, ere they shall keep us severed.
Tol. God help you, Ursula.
(Tolternicus is taken out by the guards.)
Ben. O master—
(Benedict follows, overcome by his emotion.)
Ber. Yet may
He save himself, if at the trial he changes.
I do hope still, and I will plead on yet.
(He follows the others.)
Camp. That my gray hairs!— O Niclas, Niclas, Niclas.

(Campeggio stands a moment looking after the disappearing form of his nephew; then he goes off after him.)

La R. (to Ursula.) Stay here with Cajetan. I will re-
(He goes off.) [turn.

(Ursula and Cajetan alone.)

Caj. Ursula, we must save him.

Urs. Save! O God,
Cajetan, Father—

(She kneels.)

Caj. Soft, Ursula. Kneel not.
You are a girl of daring. Make your resolve
To aid me should I ask. I'll find a plan—

Urs. Cajetan, thou givest me strength.— I had not
O Cajetan— [thought—

Caj. He is my friend, and though my duty,
As first of the Tribunal, is to kill,
I am grown skeptic of this blood— this blood
That, never changing, leads men on to die.
He is my friend.

Urs. O heaven, thanks.

(Calling without.)

Caj. They call.
Ursula, you love Tolternicus. Resolve
You'll be my second, though it lead to danger.

(He goes off hastily in the direction of the others.)

Urs. Resolve.— O God, resolve.— Resolve.— I would
Tear out these woman's tresses— make me a man,
Or in the garb of shame wear out my days
To save him— O, to save him.

(Reenter Cajetan.)

Caj. Ursula.—

Urs. Cajetan.—

Caj. You know the danger, Ursula, keep this well.
If any, even my shadow, know my purpose,
Tolternicus will be lost— we too.

Urs. O Cajetan,
If you can trust yourself to tell me this,
Trust me to keep it hid. I would be secret
Though I were tortured for it.

Caj. Then I'll work on.
Do nothing till I send word. Resolve. Resolve.
I will find means to speak to you at the trial.
Urs. I'll come to you there.
Caj. Do so. I will await you.

(Exit Cajetan.)

Urs. If he should find a way with danger in it,
And then should fear to do— No! No!
He would not ope this if he feared for danger.—
O, dear God, thanks. For here is hope— hope.

(She pauses.)

O, there are are hopes that never have fulfillment.—
If he should fail!— Then, Niclas, the seeing stars
Know my intents. In you all is now gone.
Life has no more.
Angelo, thy chemic poison will I seek.
God gives a weapon even to the weak.

ACT IV.

(Room in the Monastery of Thorn. Night. There is a window to the left of the audience, looking out on a star-lit sky. Candles are burning. In the center of the background is a desk resembling a pulpit.)

(A bell is heard tolling every half-minute.)

(Enter a sacristan and a warden.)

Ward. Ring thou the bells of all the house. For 'tis commanded that all Europe ring when the hour strikes. This comet must be charmed from out our heavens with the ringing of our bells.

Sac. But will the ringing of our bells drive off this comet?

Ward. Will it! What, hath not holy Church decreed it shall be so?

Sac. Aye, but I have sat and watched him in the sky, and I believe he'll stay for spite. He blinks like a devil. When he made eyes at me, quoth I: "Get thee behind me, Satan.", but he blinked again. Again quoth I: "Get thee behind me, Satan.", but he blinked once more. Again I quoth, quoth I: "Get thee behind me Satan."—

(Enter a second sacristan.)

2nd S. What, ho! When will they ring the bells?

Ward. In yet ten minutes. All Europe waits, and our monastery of Thorn must make the loudest noise of all, for 'tis here that this arch-rogue of a heretic has done the work.

2nd S. He's the devil himself. I always said so. When he came back from Padua with those instruments, I says, says I: "That's the devil," says I.

1st S. Lo, my very words. Quoth I: "That's the devil."— so help me God!

2nd S. Well, let the ringing of the bells drive away the comet that this rogue has raised, and lay the pest.

Ward. Brother Butts believes it not.

2nd S. What, believe you not, brother Butts, that the ringing of the bells will drive away the comet? Why it must be so, for in every city, from Napoli to Stockholm and from Warsaw to Paris, they will toot the horns and toll the bells, and that will drive the comet into China.

1st S. Aye, but I have sat and watched him. He will not away. Mark you. He blinks like a devil. When he blinked at me, quoth I: "Get thee behind me, Satan.", but he blinked again; again quoth I: "Get thee behind me, Satan.", but he blinked again; so I quoth again, quoth I: "Get thee behind me, Satan."—

(Enter a third sacristan.)

3rd S. Glory to God! There's a devil of a crowd waiting without to hear the judgment and to hark the bells. Will they ring soon?

Ward. Aye, 'tis but a turn of the glass and they'll commence.

3rd S. Let them begin, for I shudder to behold it. I scarce can wait till it explodes and vanishes.

1st S. Mark you, he'll not explode.

3rd S. Not explode!

1st S. Never. For I am certain. Mark you. He has a damnable blink. He will stay for spite. Mark you. I sat and looked at him and he sat and blinked at me. Quoth I: "Get thee behind me, Satan.", but he blinked again; so I quoth again: "Get thee behind me, Satan." Yet he would not away, so I up and I sat and I quoth, quoth I: "Get thee behind me, Satan."—

Ward. And what then? What then?

1st S. Nothing then. There he is, up in the sky, and narry an inch did he budge. He has a damnable blink.

(Enter a friar.)

Fri. How goes the trial? Has any word come in about the judgment?

Ward. Now, by the mass! I had forgot the trial, all in the ringing of the bells to drive away the comet.— Seest, brother Butts, that's of thee telling us that the ringing of the bells has a damnable blink— I mean, the

comet has the ringing of the bells.— By the mass! By the mass! It's all of thee and thy damnable blink.

Fri. But I say, how goes the trial? Has he recanted? Has he begged pardon? Will he burn his books in the market place?

Ward. Fear not. He'll not recant. He'll not recant.— And brother Butts would say 'tis cause he hath a damnable blink.

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Butts. Na, na, you may make a fool o' me, but 'twill not drive the comet into China. He'll stay. Mark you.

(Butts goes out. The rest follow.)

(Enter Cajetan with a friar.)

Fri. She is importunate to see you here,
Asks to be present at Tolternicus' trial,
And says you bade her come.

Caj. That I did not.
She is too near this heretic astronomer;
If I should speak her now the town would talk:
And for the trial, no layman may be present.
But since she is my friend I can't deny her.
Go to her; bid her into the chapel;
There let her wait. Until the trial is over
I cannot see her; but when 'tis done I'll send.

(Exit friar.)

(Cajetan paces to his desk.)

(Enter a guard.)

Guard. O sir, the trial is done. He'll not recant.
Against his friends' entreaties, against our threats,
He has spoke out he'll die or ere he'll say
One word to null his heretic writings.

Caj. Then if he'll not recant as you have offered,
Bring him before me. Once more I'll give him grace.
If he hear not, then will he be condemned.
Let in the crowd to hear our final judgment,
That all the world may know, though he's my friend,
God's holy Church stands higher than dutious love.
O, I will see him burned with the hot flame
If he'll not now recant.

Guard. I'll let the crowd in and will call him forth.

(Exit guard.)

(Cajetan rings. Reenter warden.)

Caj. What hour is set when they will ring the bells
To drive away the comet?

Ward. In yet ten minutes
Europe will ring her bells. Already the comet
Is seen to pale and turn in dread foreboding.

Caj. 'Tis well.

(Exit warden.)

Much good 'twill do, but let that pass.
The popular clamor fears this star so much
That holy Church must ring the bells of Europe
To drive it off. As well to ring our bells
To stay the firey sun in his hot course,
Or bid the pole star fall into the dipper,
As drive away this comet with such fare.
But that it comes when I most fear the people,
Frantic if it now fail, and doubly mad
To very anarchy against Tolternicus,
I'd hear it with contempt.

(A dull noise, followed by shouts, rises without. Now enter from a door to the left of the audience guards armed with pikes. After them six priests in black gowns, led by a seventh.

(Behind them comes Tolternicus; next, Campeggio, his head bowed, an expression of deepest grief on his features; after him, more priests, followed by more guards. When all have come in the guards throw open two doors to the right of the audience, and with a dull, muttering sound the crowd comes in, being parted and led to right and left into a cemicircle, the center of which is held by Cajetan, Tolternicus, Campeggio and the priests.)

(A priest, distinguished from the rest by a beard, steps forward.)

Priest. O sir, the will of God be done.

Caj. The deed.

Priest. Before our solemn trial he has been judged,

And the fulfillment waits your spoken word.

Caj. Tolternicus, stand forth.

(Tolternicus steps to the center of the circle.)

Have you bethought,
In face of heaven and before high God,
Your answer?

Tol. I have.

Caj. Know you the penalty
For your great breach?

Tol. I have been warned of all.

(Cajetan motions to a priest, who carries the bull.)

Caj. Read, then, the bull.

(The crowd, which has momentarily begun to murmur, becomes silent.)

(The priest, who holds the scroll, comes forward, kneels and prays.)

Priest. O Heavenly Father, Lord of all Being,
Giver of Life Eternal,
Most High before the Altar of Creation:—
Thou hast laid curse upon our Germany
For the vast heresy we have not stayed.
O, since our impotence still vainly struggles
To free the Lutheran blight, judge us not now.
Soon may our banners victor.— Judge us, O God,
As in our human sphere we do Thy Will.
Since now we do appease Thee with the doom,
By fire most holy and by torture sacred,
Of Thy dread enemy, hear our prayer:—
O, take the firey form from out our heavens,
Remove the plague and pest from out our bounds,
And shield us from the Turk and barbarous Moor.
For we do judge as in Thine Eye we see.

(He rises.)

In proof, ye people, do we proclaim this bull.

(Reads.)

"Leo, episcopus, servus servorum Dei,
ad perpetuam rei memoriam.
Tolternicus, astrologer of Thorn:—

Thy false, heretic doctrines, birth of the night and children of all evil, have cast upon God's world the heavenly scourge. From this to deliver, we, Supreme of the Only Holy Church, Successor to St. Peter, given with the keys to Grace, Protector of our children from heresy, do ban and excommuicate thee from our pale forever, and on our faithful enjoin we that thou diest. He that feedeth thee, houseth thee, helpeth thee, receiveth likewise our perpetual curse.
Let this be done."—

(There is a deep silence, which is prolongued some moments. When the pause has reached its climax, Cajetan speaks.)

Caj. Tolternicus, we give you one grace more.
Either you bend, beg favor and recant,
Or this hard judgment stands as there 'tis put.

Tol. O friend, your office speaks and not your will.

Caj. It is my office thus to judge you, Niclas.
You have until this printing been held the best
That man can be or wish. All the world knows
Your virtues and your talents. This city, Thorn,
Boasted your birth. Princes have been your friends,
Popes, prelates, sat at your board and you at theirs.
There is no man in God's too troubled world
Sadder to see thus hurled unto his death
By his own boldness, obstinacy and wrong,
Than Niclas Tolternicus, astronomer of Thorn.

Camp. (aside.) True, O true.

Caj. Are you prepared to waste your fruitful life,
When by recantment you may live on still—
A light and not a scourge to our dark times?

(Enter a friar.)

Fri. Tolternicus, let me make known to you
What in this hour has passed.— Good Andreas,
Your holy brother, smitten with the pest—
Died with a curse upon you for the cause,
And I that saw affirm it is your guilt
That God has punished in your brother.

Tol. So, Andreas, art thou gone before me?—
It is God's will.
Fri. Recant, and set it right.
For 'tis in punishment for your dark sinning,
And God demands you kneel, lift off this curse
That weighs upon all Thorn— on all God's world.
Crowd. The pest! The pest! The comet! The pest!
Caj. Silence!
(The guards silence the crowd.)
Tolternicus, we bid you once again.
Tol. O Cajetan, pain not your mind with pleading.
Last night I left my home with my mind made,
And through the day have found no newer cause
Why I should change.
Though you should find ten thousand arguments
To show me that I wrong, my ears are deaf.—
My life is but a shrift.
In two red mornings will I know no more.
Caj. Tolternicus, this is your last reprieve.
When we pronounce your doom no word can save.
Once it is from my mouth Our Church has spoken—
Our Church that knows no mercy in this cause.
Tol. Cajetan, speak on. I have not yet unlearned
That strength that held me from the first till now.
Caj. O Niclas, 'tis your curse and not your strength.
Tol. My cause is not my curse till I think so.
Caj. Think you are weak— weak— and your cause [doomed.
Tol. Where strength is with the weak their cause is [won.
(A bell of a different sound from the one already tolling, begins to ring. Then another joins.)
Crowd. The bells! The bells! They drive away the comet!
The bells!
(There is a tumultuous motion in the crowd. Now bells begin joining in the ringing and tolling from all directions, near and far, until the din rises to a high pitch, but throughout remains wildly harmonious, with now and then a crash of discords to relieve the concordance.

After this the ringing slowly subsides again, and the tolling of the bell can at last be heard as before. It continues a short while and then ceases. The crowd expreses great tension. Throughout this time Tolternicus has been gazing placidly toward the sky through the open window. Beside him a priest who stands next his leader, and who also has been watching the sky with breathless tension, speaks.)

Priest. Lo, the star shines still.

Mob. A judgment! A judgment!

Priest leader. (to Cajetan.) It is God's quenchless wrath
[that we thus waver.
He will not stir this omen from our heavens
Till we have wreaked His judgment on this sin.

Mob. Judgment! Judgment! Burn! Burn! Burn!

(They surge tumultuously forward. Cajetan rises and raises his hand. The guards silence the mob and force it back. Then Cajetan turns to Tolternicus.)

Caj. For the great love we bear you, kneel and recant.

Tol. If I recant it will do untold harm
To the high cause I serve. I cannot. I cannot.
Men have been martyred for upholding God,
I will be martyred for upholding the truth—
Truth, God's jewel.
If all the world rise with one voice against me,
Still will I die in peace— still will I die,
Knowing I served mankind most justly.

Caj. O, you will burn upon the flaming fagot.—
The firey fagot that Bartoldus burned.

Tol. Let them heap fagots to the firey sky,
My work will live on still though all else die.

1st Priest. This is too far.

Voice from the mob. O heretic, hear thy doom.

Mob. Burn! Burn! The pest! The pest! Burn!

Caj. Peace, in the name of God.— Tolternicus,
Your voice has spoken.
No mortal hand can now reverse your doom.
This night will you be taken to your dungeon.—
To morrow is Our Lord's.— We give you time

To shrive your soul and make your peace with God.
The next, at rise of sun, you will be burned.
Our Church has spoken. Lead off the thus condemned.
Tol. Cajetan, good-bye.
Caj. Good-bye, Tolternicus. I had
Hoped to avert this, but I cannot more.
(There is a movement amongst the crowd.)
Voice. Make way! It is his mother.
Caj. O God! his mother.
(The crowd parts and Tolternicus' mother enters, leaning on Bernard's arm. As she is about to go to Tolternicus' outstretched arms, the chief priest steps between.)
Priest. Back! O back!
He is adjudged. No mortal hand may touch,
No mortal mouth console. He is the dead.
Ber. It is his mother— his mother.
Priest. He has no mother.
Tolternicus is not.
Mob. Burn!
Tol. M. My son—
Tol. O mother, mother, this— this too.
Caj. Lead off the excommuicate.
Mob. Off! Off!— Burn!
(Tolternicus is surrounded and led off. The crowd follows in tumult. Behind them the priests slowly march off.)
Camp. Come, sister, lean on me. 'Tis the voice of
That our gray hairs— O sister, sister.— [God.—
(He goes off with Tolternicus' mother.)
(Cajetan rings. Reenter the first friar.)
Caj. Bid the Lady La Roche come in.
(Exit friar. Cajetan alone.)
'Tis done,
And not to be removed by further parley.
I know what yet may save him. This we'll try.
If it succeed all will be won forever,
If it, mischancing, fail, all will be lost.
(Enter Ursula.)
Urs. Cajetan—

Caj. It is over. He is led forth to prison.
Urs. O God, Cajetan, if you have any love—
Caj. Ursula, come to me. Listen. Have you bethought—
Urs. O Cajetan, you kept me from his trial.
There in my lonely waiting did I tremble,
Thinking the worst.— What motive can you have,
What bond have I you do not thus beguile me
To shield my grief with hope when there is none?
You are the trusted of the Inquisition;
If you deceived them, how can I hope for more?
Caj. Thinkest I trifle?
Urs. O, 'tis his life— his life.
Caj. Ursula, I had hoped more from woman— from you.
But it is nature.
You see me renegade to given duty
And think I will prove renegade to you.
Ursula, if I am false to my given trust,
'Tis that my motives yet are laudable.
When I, in Padua, a starving student,
Wrung my thin hands in desperate need of bread,
And on a fever-stricken couch soon struggled,
Tolternicus, my younger by ten years,
Happened to learn. He had no friends, no gold,
But seeing my wan couch, sold his few books,
The darlings of his heart; fed me, watched o'er me
And nursed me with his hands till I was well.
If you seek reason why I should be true,
Think on this favor. Cajetan does not forget.
Urs. He did not tell me this.
Caj. 'Tis not his nature,
Which, gen'rous to all others, is harsh to itself.—
(He pauses.)
I have yet other interest to save his life
Than my strong love— but it were easy still
Not to do danger, not to break my trust,
And let him feel th'Inquisitorial wrath.
Urs. Forgive me, O, forgive me, Cajetan, Father,
That I, for love of him, should doubt you. O,
Now all your former kindness rushes back

And I am shamed.

Caj. Speak not of it.— Our time
Is short. Hear me.
Are you prepared to enterprise your person
Upon the distant world to save his life?

Urs. I am prepared to save his life or die.

Caj. Bethink it well, for I am loath to urge,
If in the final you will be withdrawn.

Urs. Cajetan, I will do that— You cannot know
What my resolve will do.

Caj. Then hear my words.
There is but one hope more, and if you answer,
That hope is real, if you desist, is nought.

Urs. Tell me that hope, and if it be to spill
My blood in Niclas' stead, if it should be
To hold my woman's weakness 'gainst a world
Of heartless souls, I am resolved to do.

Caj. Then hear: Denmark is Lutheran. The Dane,
The Dane alone will shelter Niclas.

Caj. The Dane?

Caj. Denmark. To Denmark must he hence— and you
And I—

Urs. You!

Caj. I.

Urs. God save us, Cajetan.
Are you so moved, that you, a Catholic,
Head of the Roman Inquisition,
Abandon holy Thorn for Lutheran Denmark?

Caj. Ursula, start not if I reveal things true.
I am no Catholic and never was.
This chair I hold as head of Inquisition,
Forced on me by my birth, my need, my friends,
Has been my horror since my youngest youth,
And now— now 'tis so hateful by these murders
That yearly grow, and must grow on, not end,
That I am firm I will not hold it more.
Now do I see that God has kept me here
To save in his abandonment my friend.

But swift:—
To-morrow is Sabbath. On Monday he should die.—
If Monday we be not ten leagues from Thorn
When the red dawn awakes the sleeping city,
Tolternicus will burn.
Urs. Then let me die.
Caj. Are you prepared to go with him to Denmark?
For never will Tolternicus leave thee
In Thorn to marry with Von Lohenstein.
Rather he'll burn upon the fiery stake
Than see thee banished from his side forever.
Urs. O, I will go to the end of the earth with him.
Caj. Then we will go. I have full power,
And will arrange our exit to a point.
Friends have I on the way who'll know my purpose
And will give plenal aid.
Urs. What words have I?
O honest Catejan—
Now do I thank dear God with my full heart.
(Enter a guard.)
Guard. My lord,
The mob grows violent and will not back.
They cry his blood, hurl stones into the air
And when we thrust them back, return again.
I have been sent for aid.
(Enter a second guard.)
2nd G. My lord, my lord,
The desperate people have o'ercome us quite
And set upon our prisoner. He is torn from us,
And lest we have good aid he will be harmed.
Caj. Damnation!—Call out my guards! I will look to't.
(Exit second guard.)
(To the first guard.) Turn you your pike into a fisher's [spear,
And when you bring me ten spit through upon it
I will reward you. Tell that your fellows. Out!—
I will string up the city if but one hair
Is harmed ere comes his time.
(Exit first guard.)
Ursula, fear not.—

I will go down to see. He shall be safe.
But since I will not back, dear daughter, hear.
To-night go home. Set your affairs to serve.
Take nothing save your cloak. I'll see for all.
To-morrow night at nine I'll send a friar.
Come with him where he goes, and I'll be there.
Urs. At nine?
Caj. At nine.
Urs. At my house?
Caj. There at nine.
Be secret. Let no word 'scape. If this is known,
Even to your trustest, all may be as nought.
Urs. No one shall know. So careful will I be,
I will not sleep abed with my own sister,
Lest in my dreams my voice betray our end.
Caj. Then will I send at nine.
Urs. I will await—
O, with hard panting breath and throbbing heart
Will I await the friar.
Caj. Till then, adieu.
Be calm. All will go well. Adieu.
(He goes off.)
Urs. Adieu.
O heavens, that can give hope, kill me not now
With fearful news, Niclas is murdered.
Why now, in my joyed hour of heavenly hope,
Do I forebode worse things than are in hell?
O, 'tis the curse of danger that it brings
Dreams horrible, thoughts madly desperate,
And wild, untamed, night-boding, frigid fears,
Denying rest to the much-needing soul
Even in that time most fatal lest upheld.—
Now turns my mind on death as on itself.
(Enter two monks.)
1st M. Wounded? It serves him right.
2nd M. Hist, there's his lady.
Urs. Speak you of wounds? Look not away. O speak.
Have they murdered him? O speak.
1st M. Pax vobiscum.—

He's not so lucky.

2nd M. Nay brother, 'tis not noble.
My lady, he's been beaten of the mob,
But in the consequence nothing serious.

1st M. He will be well enough to burn on Monday.

2nd M. Forbear, brother. Hurl not thy sting on her
Can have no blame. Fear nothing, lady.
Cajetan, our worthy head, has calmed the rabble,
And he is taken to prison. Peace be with you.

(Exunt the two monks.)

Urs. Let the worst come. But no, I'll think it well.
Yet I have a foreboding it is not well.

(Enter a friar.)

Fri. Your ladyship, one Angelo of Florence,
An alchemist of Italy, stands without
And urgently would speak you.

Urs. Angelo?—

Fri. An Italian. An alchemist.—

Urs. I know him. Send him here.

(Exit friar.)

He comes too late to do his mortal work.
O sleepless Fortune, still dost thou hover near.
Had I sent Niclas this Angelo's poison,
He would have taken his life ere we could save.

(Enter Angelo.)

Ang. O lady, I was held and could not come.
Yet do I hope I can fulfill my vow.

Urs. Give me the poison.

(Angelo gives her a tiny package.)

Ang. Guard you it well.
It is a cubus of such deadly power
That he but touches it to his tongue's tip
Dies like a candle.

Urs. 'Tis well. 'Tis not too late.

Ang. Good lady, keep this well. If this were known—

Urs. Fear nothing. I know to guard a pledgéd secret.
Get thee away, else mayest thou be questioned.
(Angelo takes a few steps away from her, when he turns again.)

Ang. Lady La Roche, 'tis with deep pain I bring this.
But that I gave my vow as he gave his,
And know the torture this will ease him of,
I would not bring it.
Urs. I thank your zeal.
(Exit Angelo.)
O friendship, now art thou at a dangerous ebb,
When thou impartest poison to thy fellow.
So, fortune. This deadly cubus will I keep.
If aught miscarry in my Niclas' flight
This mortal drop may find another tongue
Than Angelo intended.—
To-morrow night at nine. Cajetan be
Thou sure. I do believe we will yet save,
And Denmark be our bed— or the dark grave.
Let the end see.

ACT V.

SCENE 1.

(A room in Ursula's house. Sunday night.)

(Enter Ursula with Benedict.)

Urs. Now we have 'scaped them, Benedict, come aside.

Ben. My lady, they will pursue us hither. Your father
Swears he will give Von Lohenstein to you,
And do't to-night.

Urs. Leave this. I must speak swift.
Nine has gone by and ten, and now eleven,
And still he does not send. O Benedict,
There is some fatal stop.
I had not thought to tell a living soul,
But so much must I say, that I must see him,
Or all is lost forever.

Ben. Lady La Roche,
What I can do I will. Though you'll not tell
The nature and the end of my commission,
I know from this bold speech my master's life
Hangs in the balance. I'll go to Cajetan
As you request, and bring him to his word.
Mayhap some chance misfortune holds him off,
And my soon knowing will restore your peace.

Urs. O, bid him send at once. I cannot wait.
It is an hour to midnight, when— O God!—
Benedict, haste.

(Exit Benedict.)

He cannot be untrue.
I know too well, his manly words came from
His heart. He would not for this world see Niclas
Burn on the fagot. If he not sends it is
No ordinary fault, but some great breach.
Perchance, the friar has, stumbling, missed his way;
And will thus by his blunder publish all;
Or if through wile he won his master's purpose,

He might have told the city, so to undo us,
And Cajetan is waiting, who does not come.—
O God, there are a thousand luckless falls
Hid in the path of every dangerous deed,
And now the purpose is to save his life,
Danger is desperation.— If Niclas' wound
Proved worse, or Cajetan could find no friends
To help us on the way, and therefore sends not.
But soft. My father and the Count. Let me—
Where shall I go?—

(Enter La Roche with Von Lohenstein.)

La R. Daughter, come here. What kind of means are [these,
That when we bid you down to company
You flee your room and will not be found out?

Urs. 'Tis late, father.— I am not well.

La R. Ursula.
Hark to your father. Have I not held you well,
Reared you in luxury, been kind to you
As to none else, looked to your future with
A father's care, shielded you ever— ever?
Can you reproach in me a parent's vice
Other than indulgence? Have I not been
More patient than the spider in my labors
To rear a patrimony that your children
And children's children may enjoy the fruits—
For you, Ursula, my first-born daughter?

Urs. Father, what would you say? All this is true.

La R. Then if my duty has been ever tried,
Think it not falt'ring now.

Urs. I know not, father.
What you would win by such unpointed words,
But if you wish to push Von Lohenstein's suit
Let me again beg time. I cannot now—
Not now— give answer.

La R. Ursula, hear me.
'Tis why I came at this late hour again.
For I would tell you there are things abroad
Admit no late postponement to this marriage.
Your name— my name— with this misfortunate act

Is linked to heresy, by your engagement
With rash Tolternicus; and though broke off,
The people will look on us as allied
Till you are severed indissolubly.
Therefore I hasten what must come at last.
You say you cannot bring another reason
Against my choice save that it is too soon.
I show you reason why 'tis not too soon,
But absolutely right to act at once.

Urs. Father, hear me—

Von L. Lady, if aught in me
Shows me unworthy, freely speak your mind.
I would not force, save that it seems the best.
My name can shield you, else I'd not come now
So hard upon your grief.

Urs. Von Lohenstein,
If, as you say, you love, persuade my father,
This is no time to talk of hasty marriage,
When my late— friend— still languishes ere death.

La R. Are you so bold? Then know: I had now come
To reason you, persuade you, to my end,
But now I see that reason's lost on woman,
I will take my full place. Yet am I father—
Yet are you daughter.—
Von Lohenstein, you shall have her to-morrow—
To-morrow, lady, by the earliest mass.
I have brought you a husband in this count—
No nobler could you find in all God's world.

Urs. Father—

La R. No words! Kneel and give heaven thanks
That from the jaws of death thou art thus saved,
And the foul dragon that beguiled thy love
Replacéd with a man of heavenly faith.
Von Lohenstein—

Von L. The lady is not well.
I am unseasonable. I will withdraw.

La R. Nay, go not, Lohenstein.—

(Exit Von Lohenstein.)

Thou insultest the man

In his presence.—

Urs. O father, if thou'rt a man,
Hear me.
You here do force me to declare my will,
I shall do so and leave no breach for question.
My hand is not yours, father, or my own
To give to this rich count.
Were he a prince, were he king of the earth—
I cannot marry him.

La R. You cannot marry!

Urs. Father, what is this.
But two days past you gave me with your vow
To one that now lives dead. Think you, though you
Thus cast away my hand, that my true love,
Born of a life's long reverence, can in a day
Be shifted from its source and turned that way
Your choosing does adopt? I am no toy.
My heart is not of wax. In my red veins
No fickle water flows.
O, would you with rash haste bind my young body
Forever to a man I cannot love?

La R. Rash! Haste!— Fire and devils!

Urs. Father, you e'er have loved me till this hour,
Forsake me not, now in my time of trial.

La R. Forsake!— You she-devil!

Urs. Father—

La R. Undutiful child!
Up from your knees! I'll witness no more tears.

(Enter Bernard and Agnes.)

Urs. O Bernard— Agnes—

Agn. What, on her knees!

Ber. La Roche—

La R. No word! I have spoken out my mind.
The time is past that my fond heart will turn.
Cast you away? Damnation! Cast you away?—
What's he that lies now in the rightful dungeon?—
What's he? Devil!— There had I cast you away.
There had you foundered. Devil, you'll do my will
Or by the highest heaven I'll find a poison

So bitter to your taste, you'll beg me marry
Rather than swallow.
Agn. O father, think of her grief— her loss— her grief.
La R. Think you I'll soften? No, by the high God!
You'll marry, lady, or I will see you dead
In that same dungeon where Tolternicus lies
Ere I'll have such a daughter.
Hark you— to-morrow! If by to-morrow morn
You are not framed to marry Lohenstein
I'll have you shackled and torn to the church.
For by the living Lord! this shame shall not
Rest on my name.

(Exit.)

Agn. O Ursula, our father's in his rage.
Go after him, beg him, hang round his neck,
For when he's in this frame he will do things
We all may live to rue.
Ber. Ursula, come.
Agn. Wring not your hands.
Urs. There is a God above
Looks o'er us in our trouble.
Ber. O, what he does
Is for our best. If Niclas is in prison,
Doomed to his death, who knows but wisest God
Meant him not for thee. Look on this Lohenstein.
He is a noble and of large estate.
O, many a princess would be glad to love
So famed a man. Niclas would have it so,
And being dead— or being soon to die—
Even though my friend— life is too short to squander.
Make the dear best of fate and choose this count,
For life is better lived, though with sad mem'ry,
In princely turrets than o'er the widowed grave.
Urs. Is this a heart!
Ber. A true one and your friend.
What can be gained?— Weep for the dead to come,
But ruin not in that misfortune all
The joys of future welfare yet untasted.
Urs. Bernard— O Agnes, hast thou such a husband!

Better— but no, all are not like on earth.
Agn. O Sister, see this as it is. Niclas,
Though he did love you deep, beyond all else,
Would not for even that love bend to be saved.
If he had not the heart to bend for you—
And his great breach was done in the full knowledge—
He does not merit that you sacrifice
The more for him,
Ber. 'Tis thus. Who can deny it?
Urs. What would our living mother say to this—
Our mother that is dead and sees us now?
Agn. Ursula, for our dear mother's sake, part not
Our father's house with feud. Do now his bidding.
Whatever sacrifice you make him now
A thousand fold will be repaid you later.
Marry this count. God will then make you love.
We'll go to father and will soothe his rage.
Meantime prepare—
Ber. Stay, I'll go to him now.
(Exit Bernard.)
Urs. Better I had not heard this, Agnes.
Agn. Ursula—
Urs. Speak no more of it, Agnes— speak no more.—
Our mother— O, our mother.—
Agn. Ursula—
Urs. Agnes,
You know that little picture of our mother
That hangs within the casket in my chamber.—
When our dear mother died she drew me to her,
Kissed me and whispered; "Ursula, my daughter,
If in thy hour of trial thou lackest council
Then look on this.
Do as thou'd do were thy not-living mother
Before thee."
Bring me that picture.
O, in this hour I need my mother's care.
Agn. If it will soothe you, Ursula, I will bring it.
(Exit Agnes.)
Urs. God, give me power. Is all the world of stone?

Is this a man, a woman? They know I love—
Can they thus counsel— they that, not yet married,
Look to each other?— O now I know at last,
There are hearts in this world that marry by flesh
And love each other like the beasts of the field.
That I should be thus torn!— Rather the hell,
That in my tender youth gave me such horrors,
Shall be my dungeon, than one day I'll live
Untrue to Niclás. Let them decide— let them.—
I can decide— I, too.

(Reenter Agnes.)

Agnes, the picture.

Leave me now, Sister, with my great grief.

Agn. You will be changed by morning.
This passion will boil down and your cool reason
Take to your heart the noble count.

(Ursula, after looking at the picture, clasps her sister.)

Urs. Agnes,
I know not what runs through me at this moment,
But I forebode— This picture— at this hour—
Our mother's face brings back such memories—

Agn. Sister, shall I not stay? I fear to leave you.
These words— these looks. I fear to leave you, Sister.

Urs. 'Tis the late hour, Agnes. Go you to bed.

(She kisses Agnes. Agnes goes to the door. When she is about to go out Ursula calls her again.)

Sister, stay yet a minute. Kiss me again.

Agn. Thou art now led our way.— Dear Sister—.

Urs. Agnes, there lives a power within my breast
Will not be led, but leads. In yet an hour
'Twill show which is the stronger, my love or— yours.

Agn. These are enigmas.

Urs. No— O, holy truth.

Agn. This is strange speaking, Ursula.— But 'tis the hour
And your great grief.— To-morrow, Ursula,
Come you to father, beg pardon and receive,
And kneel at church with Lohenstein in the morning.

Urs. Sister— good night.
Agn. Good night.
(Exit Agnes.)
Urs. Rather I'll kneel
In that dark dungeon where Tolternicus lies,
Dead in his arms, than go to church in the morning.
Now, Ursula, too well I know the reason
Thou tookest that Angelo's poison.
(Enter Benedict.)
So, Benedict—
Ben. Ursula, I am refused— and with ill grace.
They thrust me from the door with violent threat,
And would not hear my begging in your favor.
Urs. Gave they no message? Importuned you them not
How Niclas does?
Ben. 'Twas said— he is not well.
Urs. O Benedict, hide not, for I divine
Thou wouldst say more.
Ben. Ursula, 'tis but the rumor—
Put no trust in it— oft the rumor lies—
Niclas is wounded deeper than was thought,
And— he is serious sick.
Urs. Sick.— O God!
Benedict, tell me. Tears are in your eyes.
O, turn not off your face. Is he dead? Is he dead?
O Benedict—
Ben. They said— Niclas— is dying.
Urs. Then it is so.
(She stares wildly before her.)
(Benedict covers his face.)
O, can you weep— you that were his servant?
And I stand coldly dumb.— So, Niclas— so.
Dying?— Did they say dying? O God! Dying?
Better dead— dead.— Then if I cannot lead
Thee from thy prison, God, in thy pure heaven
Will we unite.
(She goes to a sofa in the corner, kneels before it and presses her face in the cushions.)
(Enter a servant.)

Serv. Benedict, come aside.
Soft, man, thou'rt wanted. There is a friar without
Would speak you at the door. He'll send no message
And will not come himself. Come after me.

(Exit servant.)

Ben. So they will take me too. Belike 'tis thought
I am secret with my master, and they send
To lead me to the Inquisition too.
If 'tis their game they'll have a willing charge,
For never will I die more honorably
Than in my master's way. If I be taken—
(Aloud.) Ursula, God shield you. I will pray for you.
She does not hear. What do I slave, prate on
Of my small self, when all her world lies dying.
Niclas— O, could my death restore— But stay.
This may be other than I think and this friar
Bring welcome news.

(Reenter the servant.)

Serv. Haste, Benedict.
He must be off. 'Tis one of Cajetan's men,
And says from Cajetan he has good news.

(Exit servant.)

Ben. Good news! Then will I tell her.—Soft, she weeps.
This may be joyous liberation.
But if I tell and it should not be so,
'Twill then but pain her more. Sudden and glad
Is hope, but terrible the shattering.
I'll down and see for sure and tell her after.

(He goes off.)

Urs. O mother, thou diedst too soon.
(She remains a few moments in this position. Then she raises her head.)
Where is that native resolution
I held to till this hour? If he is dying
And Cajetan has failed— O God!— To-morrow—
Shall I be live and hear the bloody mob
Howl at his burning? Shall I be live?
Father in heaven!— I had forgot.— O God!

Shall I to church— to marry— to marry in the morning?

(She rises.)

Where is that poison? Open, closet— so.

(She holds the poison before her.)

Angelo, now come thy words back to me
In the same form, but with new realness.
This deadly cubus, touched upon this tongue,
And my soul flies forever. Chemical heaven.
Now art thou healing medicine, O cubus.
I fear not thee. Drink, then, my soul— O drink.

(She raises the poison to her lips, but in the instant of touching them lets her hand sink.)

If it should be he is not as report
And Cajetan has sent this rumor forth
Misleading the populace.— Why sent he not
For me? O, should he deem it wise first to
Bring Niclas safe to Denmark, then rescue me,
All were yet safe. Dear God, direct me.
I cannot live if Niclas die to-morrow.
I cannot live if Niclas die to-night.
I will not marry. I cannot live till morning.
Then cubus.— If now I drink this drop, no hand,
Not even God's can turn it back again—
That life that flees this body.

(She looks at the poison.)

Can it be true that this small drop of earth
Can so distill the spirit of creation
That this now-living body lose its motion;
These eyes that see, their lustre; these hands that bear,
Their power to bear again— and this quick mind
That now can will, no power of willing more?
I care not.
O mother, in heaven, look on your troubled child.
You know I love— You know I cannot live
If God has called for Niclas. O, dear mother,
Advise me— help me— save me, O my mother.

(A call without.)

I pant.
The hour is near when Niclas will be led

To his last morning mass. They will not save him.
I know it— O, I know it. They will not save him.
If heaven leave me now— O cubus.

(She raises the drop.)

Ben. (Calls without.) Ursula.

(Her hand remains motionless midway to her mouth.)

Urs. 'Tis Benedict. When left he me?
These tones are joyous as life and entice me back.
Must I drink ere he come?— Wait, poison— thou
Canst wait.

(Enter Benedict.)

Ben. O Ursula, God has stayed with us still.
A friar has come from Cajetan with news.
You shall at once take horse and come with him.

Urs. I thank thee, God. O Benedict, now may
Kind heaven bless you.

Ben. Be swift, he bade me urge. A sudden delay
Held Cajetan till now. There is no minute to lose.
He told me all, and I will go along.
If in an hour from now we are not well
Without the city gates, all will be lost.

Urs. Then Benedict, get our horses.

Ben. They stand full saddled, waiting in their stalls.
I ordered ere I came.

Urs. Well thought provision.
(Aside.) So, poison, why I take thee know I not,
But from thee will I never part— in life—
Till Niclas is in Denmark or I am— dead.

(She conceals the poison in her bodice.)

Ben. What puttest thou in thy bosom under thy cloak?
May I not bear it?

Urs. 'Tis but a trifle— a gift
That I should bear to Niclas. Think not of it.
Forget, and let us go.—

(He hesitates.)

Morning will tell.

Ben. If by the morn we are not far toward Denmark,
This city Thorn will build a brighter fire
Than ever Niclas feared or frantic hoped.

Urs. If by morn we are not on our way,
God is my witness, I shall ne'er see day.

(They go out.)

(Enter two servants.)

1st S. What, bid you saddle?

2nd S. Saddle and hold. 'Twas like a bolt from heaven. This Benedict has something of his master in him that I must bow to. 'Tis said there's a kinship betwixt man and master, that as the master doeth, so doth his man likewise.

1st S. But where go they, think you?

2nd S. Guess and be silent. That friar came from the prison.

1st S. Think you they've gone to see Tolternicus? It is forbid.

2nd S. Tut. Put your eye to the keyhole, brother, and you will see some things the door shows not.

1st S. Our master will be wroth.

2nd S. Here he comes now. We'll about our business and to bed, or we'll get the cuffs.

(Exunt together.)

(Enter La Roche.)

La R. Empty.— Where is this daughter?— Ursula!
She is not in her room, for I was there.
What, ho! Is no one up? Are all my villians
In bed before their master?

(Reenter the first servant.)

Where is your mistress?

1st S. She's gone, sir.

La R. Gone! Gone where?

1st S. I know not, sir.

La R. You know not! Fire of hell!

1st S. The servant of that heretic has been here, and they are saddled and off. They went but now.

(Enter a second servant.)

2nd S. My lord, a friar from the monastery
Begs to come in. He has swift news for you,
And says he must see you at once.

La R. From the monastery?

2nd S. The monastery. 'Tis one of Cajetan's men.
I know him by his beard. He is the second
To come.
La R. The second!—
1st S. There's one that came before.
La R. I see a light. Devils!— Bid him come in.
(Exit the second servant.)
Was she with Benedict?
1st S. With Benedict, sir. He bade us saddle and hold
The horses ready. Then they mounted and off.
La R. What fears come o'er me. Gone? What, gone?
1st S. Gone.
La R. If she has fled with him.— But no. This can
Not be. For he'll be locked in double bars,
And watch set o'er his dungeon.— But she is gone
To speak him ere his doom. This must not be.
My name is sullied forever.—
(Enter a friar.)
La R. O holy friar—
Fri. La Roche, give me a word.
(The first servant retires.)
La R. Where is my daughter? Speak. Where is my
[daughter?
I tremble and know not wherefore.— My daughter?
Fri. Guess you it then?— La Roche, hear me in haste.
This hour, and not until, a plot was bared
That, none else knowing, I have power to tell.
Cajetan prepares to wrest Tolternicus
From his doomed cell away to Lutheran Denmark.
Your daughter goes along.
La R. My daughter!
Fri. Your daughter.
If you would save her, haste. At this same hour
They meet within the prison to bear him hence.
La R. O God in heaven!
Fri. Delay not. 'Twill be too late.
(The friar moves away.)
La R. Stay. Tell me this more.
Fri. I dare not. I must haste.

If they should pass the gates there's no recalling.

La R. How came you by this news? Who told you?

Fri. In the last hour Cajetan told me all, [Speak.
Thinking my aid would help him to a litter
For the wound-weak Tolternicus.
But holding my churchly honor above my friendship,
I promised and— came to you.

(Exit friar.)

La R. Where is my sword?
Alarm! Awake! My villians! Alarm! Alarm!

(Enter servants, running.)

1st S. What, master—?

La R. Villian, get my sword!

(Exit the first servant.)

Saddle my horses!

(Exit second servant.)

Send to Von Lohenstein!
Call all my villians to arms!

(Exunt other servants.)

(Enter Agnes.)

Agnes!

Agn. Father—

La R. Where's Bernard?

Agn. He left for home.

La R. No matter!

Agn. O father, what is this?

La R. The kite has flown.
My daughter— Damnation! My daughter.

Agn. Ursula!

La R. Get you a guard of villians— A guard— A guard.—
And go to Bernard's. Stay there till I come.

(He stamps his foot.)

(Exit Agnes.)

(Reenter servants, armed.)

2nd S. The horses are saddled, sir.

1st S. Here is your sword.

La R. (taking it.) Damnation! What I will do—
(He raises the sword and dagger-wise stabs it through

the table, then draws it forth.)

'Twill serve. To horse!

This race of vipers!
I'll see his head upon my spitted sword
Or ere he leaves this town with my pure daughter.

(Exit La Rocne with the armed servants.)

(Two servants remain behind.)

1st S. What, is the devil loose? I never saw our master in such a rage.

2nd S. He is set off to prison, but what he'll do may harm our lady. I would this had not been.

1st S. Why, I had thought our troubles at an end, since now the comet is withdrawing away again.

2nd S. I thought so too. It was the comet that held our Thorn in spell. Not mere the pest— even the wars came thence.

(Enter a third servant.)

3rd S. News! News! Our Prince of Brandenburg is back from Denmark. The wars are done.

1st S. From Denmark!

2nd S. What, is Prince Albert in Thorn?

3rd S. He but came in to-night with Rheticus and other Lutheran learned. Christian of Denmark pressed us to a truce, and by the articles, signed at Copenhagen, our Albert has agreed to change his faith. Henceforth is Brandenburg no longer Roman. The Inquisition is dead.

1st S. This is strange news, indeed.

2nd S. If this be true, Tolternicus, that is to be burned in the morning, may yet be saved, if Albert be told in time.

3rd S. Tolternicus is his friend?

1st S.)
) O, of the best!
2nd S.)

2nd S. But are you certain we are Lutheran?

3rd S. Most certain and most sure.

2nd S. And is this known without? Does all Thorn know?

3rd S. No, not a soul. A servant of the Prince, that owes me money, told me in private.
Our sovereign will proclaim to-morrow morn.

1st S. Lutheran!— Fire and death!

2nd S. Ape not our master.— I have it! (To the 3rd servant.) Go you to Bernard. Tell him this news, and he will rouse the Prince from his late bed to save Tolternicus.

1st S. You will receive reward. Prince Albert holds Tolternicus most near his heart.

3rd S. If this be so— My horse is saddled— Then I will go at once.

1st S. Do so. 'Tis but an hour to morning. Haste, or 'twill be too late.

2nd S. O haste! And we will vouch for all.

(Exit third servant.)

1st S. Tolternicus served me well whenever he came here.

2nd S. And our good lady loves him truly.

1st S. They have most foully wronged him. I said so from the first.

2nd S. And so did I.

1st S. Let us keep wake. For if this come to good, I'll be most glad of it.

2nd S. From my heart. From my heart.

ACT V.

SCENE 2.

(A room in the prison of the Inquisition. To the left of its center is a bed, on which Tolternicus lies asleep. A torch burns in the foreground. Above Tolternicus' head is a barred window, through which a night-heaven may be seen.

Enter Cajetan with five men, clad as monks, who bear a litter. At a sign from Cajetan they conceal their weapons under their cloaks. Cajetan casts a glance at Tolternicus, then passes with the men to a door to the

right of the audience, and opens it.)

Caj. Stand you behind this door. This gallery is
Untrod save at the dawn. 'Tis yet some minutes
Ere we can bear him out.— First she must come.
Speak not, nor move, for there'll be men within
Would rather have us burn in hellish torture
Than see us save our man. Lock you, for safety.
Three knocks upon this door, and you will enter,
Bring in the litter and bear off our man.—
But stay.— I hear a foot.
If I am found within this hall this hour
Suspicion will draw. I'll with you and return.

(Exit.)

(Enter two monks from the left. They go to Tolternicus' bed.)

1st M. He was hard hit.
For five whole hours he lay senseless here,
After they bound the wound, and life and death
Struggled for the kingship.— How sleeps he now?

2nd M. He's pale as ivory death.
How this would turn with time is past my telling,
But in an hour he dies.

(They bend down and listen.)

1st M. He breathes yet fast,
And with the deep of night seems near his waking.
It was his wont to sleep o' day and watch
The stars at night. So when the office passes
The learned use still stays and trainéd nature
Turns to her custom.— What time is't by the glass?

2nd M. 'Tis nigh near twelve.

(A bell tolls two strokes.)

1st M. Some soul has sought our God.

(Enter a third monk.)

3rd M. Where stays good Cajetan?— O, this is sad.

1st M. Speak, who has died, that they thus toll the bell?

3rd M. Campeggio is gone. His tender spirit
Broke with the grief of this so sorry son.

2rd M. So, is he gone.

3rd M. He died, whisp'ring the name

Of him that here lies wounded, waiting his end.

(The bell tolls two strokes again.)

1st M. This is some other. Whose is this second tolling?

3rd M. It is the sister— his mother that lies here.

1st M. Sancta Maria.—

2nd M. Tolternicus, thou hast a sorry end.—
How did she die?

3rd M. Her old heart broke when they
Thrust her away and would not let her see
Her heretic son. She was a kind old soul,
Unworthy to have bred so base a boy.—
He is the cause of all their agéd trouble.—
She died, tending her brother.

2nd M. Does Cajetan know?

3rd M. I came to tell him, but he is not here.

2nd M. He'll be here soon. It is his wont to come
Ev'n at the midnight mass to wake the doomed.

(Tolternicus turns in his sleep.)

Tol. (half aloud.) It is the stars— the stars.

1st M. Still, still, the stars.
So 'tis his custom, when he turns on's cot,
To think upon the stars. Thus do our plagues
Trouble us in bed and make our dreams our reals.

(He touches Tolternicus.)

Awake.— The master of the prison will come
To take his last farewell. Awake.— So, so.

Tol. Is my hour come?

1st M. Night has not reached her pole,
But your life's lease awaits the coming guards,
Who, when the midnight bell proclaims the hour,
Will lead you to your final mass.

(Enter Cajetan from the left.)

Prepare.
Our master comes to say farewell forever.

(Cajetan goes to Tolternicus' side.)

Caj. Niclas—

Tol. Heaven thank you, Cajetan.— O friend,
I had not thought to hold this hand again.
Well, it must still be so, and men will die,

Not for their share of evil, but for that fill,
That superflux of good, which e'er is fatal.
Where will they build my pyre?
Caj. Tolternicus—
Tol. Aye, 'tis a topic I'll know soon enough.
Caj. I have some news to tell.
Tol. (rising in bed.) Is mother dead?
Caj. Heaven bless her! I hope not.
Tol. Thanks, thanks, heaven.
(He sinks back again.)
Methought I saw her even now, as I dreamed,
Weeping with God, and my good uncle by her.
(The three monks cross themselves. Cajetan, with a motion of his hand, dismisses them.)
Caj. Niclas, the hour is come to take you hence,
Not to your burning, but to your liberty.
(Tolternicus rises in bed.)
Tol. Cajetan—
Caj. Soft, Niclas, in an hour we must
Be from the city gates, or our lives, too,
Will share your darker danger.
Tol. Heaven help us, Cajetan,
What mean these words? Think you to save me— me,
The heretic— the doomed— the condemned?
Caj. O soft. I have a litter ready for
Your taking. Ursula is sent for— I—
I, too, will go.
Tol. I dream— or I am mad.
Caj. O, it is true— true.
Tol. Cajetan— my friend—
Give me your hand.— So, 'tis warm, 'tis live.—
How comes this? Speak.
Caj. Hold me not now.
Time presses. But this is true. And in short space
Ursula will come. I've sent, and she will go.
Tol. O, this is madness, Cajetan. Should it now fail,
I cannot have her death upon my mind.
I cannot have her ruined, even in success,

That my poor life live on.— Sick— O, sick.

(He sinks slowly back in bed.)

Caj. Is it the wound?— Thou losest color.
O, thou lookst pale as death.

Tol. 'Twill pass— O, sick.
Ease off the bandage from my forehead, Cajetan.

Caj. There is no bandage there.

Tol. It throbs and pains.
They used me stormily. My memory clogs,
And but a dim dumb murmur from the crowd
Remains with the red glare when I was clubbed.

(Enter a monk.)

Monk. (to Cajetan.) O sir, the Lady La Roche is waiting.

Tol. Ursula?

Caj. Bid her come in, and while she stays within,
Till I do bring her forth, let none come past.
Mark you this well, for I'll not be disturbed.

Monk. A man is with her, Benedict by name.

Caj. Let him come too, and lock the door behind.
I'll have no interruption. Mark you, none.

(Exit Monk.)

Niclas, draw together. Put all your strength
Into resolve. I have a litter ready
And men to bear it. We'd be away and safe
Beyond the walls had my plans worked at first.
What, cold? No answer? Poor, beaten man—fainted.
He must not fail us now. (He shakes Tolternicus.)
Niclas, awake! Bear up! Awake! Awake!—
Now open his lids.— Niclas, Niclas, bear up!

Tol. O Cajetan, if you would help me now,
Bring Ursula.
Though I go not to Denmark, yet must I foil them,
And they will burn a dead man in the morning.

Caj. What fears come o'er me. O Niclas, speak not death.
Your pale lips tell me— O, speak not of death.

Tol. Death is my friend. Though I gave gladly all,
This world— I see it now— is not for me.
I did my Godly duty by mankind,
And now rise up eternal to my fountain.

My work is done.— But for dear Ursula,
I had been blessed to die so early.
Caj. Say not—
But soft, here comes who'll make life well again.
(Enter Ursula.)
(Behind her, Benedict.)
(The door is heard being locked behind them.)
Urs. O God, this dungeon's dark makes me more feared,
And every step like sinking to a tomb.—
O Niclas—
(Tolternicus tries to rise, but falls back again.)
Tol. Can God give mercy still?
Thou art an angel, come to me from heaven—
And Benedict— O servant of my bosom.
Urs. Love, art thou here so languished. Thou'rt pale—
Horror o'ercomes me. Come— Come from this cell. [pale.
Let us to horse, let us to Denmark.— Away!
I dread each moment stayed within this tomb.
Caj. My men wait with the litter. Let us be gone.
Tol. (half rising.) Cajetan, Ursula, think not of flight.
I shall not live to see the breaking dawn.
You cannot save.— Look you, my side— my side.
There went a partisan and made a wound.
Caj. 'Tis bound. I ordered. And 'tis healing well.
Tol. No, Cajetan.— Raise the cover.
Caj. O my foreboding!
(He raises the cover. All start back.)
Caj.)
Urs.) Blood! Blood!
Ben.)
Caj. What hand has done this?
Tol. O,
Forgive me, Ursula, Cajetan, Benedict.— Forgive.
Thinking to cheat the tortures of a victim,
And lacking poison, which I begged thee for,
With my own hand I tore the bandage off.
'Tis gone. My life is gone. In yet an hour
With that same blood that ebbs so slowly away

My spirit will flow to God.

Urs. So, it is done.

(Benedict covers his face.)

Tol. No, Benedict, weep not—

Ben. Pardon me, master.

(He turns away.)

Tol. Weep not for me. I am not worthy it.

Urs. Then, Niclas— I can die too.

Caj. Speak not of dying.

What's done can yet be remedied— and will.
Come! Be swift! There is a surgeon's care
On our fast way. The litter! We must go.
(He hastens to the door to the right and knocks. The men open and enter.)
In, the litter!

Tol. O Cajetan, I am a dying man.

Caj. If dying, not dead. In, softly bear him, so.
(They put Tolternicus into the litter. As they are doing so a knocking is heard at the door to the left.)

Caj. Who knocks?

Voice. 'Tis I, your aid.

Caj. What would you, say?

Voice. There's one without, full armed, asks to come in,
With fisted followers. His name's La Roche—
The lady's father that I but let in.

Caj. Hold him without. Let him not in.— Not in!

Voice. I told him he can not. But he bids on,
And desperate swears he will break down the door
If I not open or bring back his daughter.

Caj. Call up the prison guards if he'll not stay.
In this last hour no man must come within.

Voice. I will.

Caj. This is misfortunate. He has some knowledge.
I see it!— The friar I sent without for aid—
He came not back, and he has told La Roche.
I felt as I did speak I could not trust him.
Away. Away. The northern gate is ours.
For I prepared even for this.

(As the men are about to seize the litter, La Roche is heard behind the scenes.)

La R. O, by the Lord! Wilt bar me! By the lord!

Voice. Help, ho! Help!

Caj. He will break in.

La R. Stand to your arms!

Voice. O help!

La R. Burst down the doors, kill any man that stands
Betwixt me and my daughter.

(The door is broken in and La Roche enters, sword in hand, followed by his armed servants.)

Ha, art thou there?

Caj. Stay, La Roche.

La R. No words, traitor! No words.
I apprehend thee for a villian traitor.
Slave, thou shalt burn! Advance, seize on him. Traitor!
While my hand holds a sword this man is doomed.

(Ursula and Benedict step between.)

Urs. O father, father, stay!

La R. You renegade!
You base, undutied daughter! Half have I mind
To see thee burn alive. I would not waste
A servant's blood for thee, but that my name
Is sullied with this contact. Go! Get you home!

Urs. O, home— I have no home.

La R. In castle walls
Will I seal up your days.— You renegade!
Now you will do my will, or I will lay
A hand upon you that will feel like iron.

(He advances toward Ursula.)

(Benedict steps between.)

Ben. La Roche, I know you for a virtuous father,
But by the lord! I know your Ursula too.
O, you will never touch your virgin daughter
Till God has struck me dead.

La R. So ho! So ho!
Then, villian, let God strike!

(He runs Benedict through with his sword.)

Ben. O, I am slain.

Tolternicus— Master. (Dies.)

Caj. Disarm him! On your lives!

(Cajetan's men come forward.)

La R. Is it thus spoken?
Come on, you traitor! You heretic! You traitor!
Come on!

(They fight.)

(Enter, from the left, armed cloister guards, followed by a friar.)

Caj. O, we are lost.

Lead. of guards. Where is the villian that with sword
Forces our peaceful passage? [and men

Caj. Lost, O, lost.

(The guards seize La Roche.)

La R. Unhand me, villian! There is the true traitor.
Back! Back! I can uphold my course.
Give me my daughter. I can uphold my course.

(He is overpowered.)

Caj. Lead him away. I'll answer.— And go all.

La R. Will you thus bind me, when that traitor, Cajetan,
Lodges at large? Look to your doors. Bar up!
For by the lord! he is prepared to flee
With that same heretic to Lutheran Denmark,
And I came to prevent.

L. of guards. O Cajetan,
What means this litter— these men? What means this
With the condemned upon, ready to leave? [litter

Caj. Means!— Slave! Fool! Dolt! Ask me not,
But go.

(Some of Cajetan's litter-bearers make toward the door to the right, as if to escape.)

L. of guards. Bar up that door! Bar up!

(Guards bar up the door.)

Now, by the mass!
No man shall leave this chamber— even my chief—
Till this is clear as day.— Bring in more torches.

(Torches are brought.)

(A bell tolls.)

Fri. It is the bell that rings the midnight mass,
And the condemned must come for his last kneeling.
(Enter, from the left, priests with torches; behind them more guards.)
1st Pr. It is the hour that we must bear him hence.
(A semicircle forms about Tolternicus' litter. In its center are Cajetan and Ursula.)
(Tolternicus, during the past struggle, has partly risen and now looks sadly about.)
Tol. You need not bear me out, for my last mass
Even now is saying. Benedict, liest so low?
O, had I died in time!
(He sinks back on the litter.)
Caj. (to the guards.) Stay, stay your hand.
The sign of death is writ upon this face.
In yet a little his soul will be with God.
Urs. O Niclas, Niclas, Niclas.
Fri. He breathes! He speaks!
(Tolternicus slowly rises again to a sitting posture and looks dazedly about.)
Tol. Ursula, Cajetan, I have borne still my part
To pull you under. O, forgive.— Forgive.
If the world turns on you in this last hour
For aiding me, heaven should not let you suffer.
I asked this not, and would not have it so.
Ursula, come. I loved you— O, I loved you.
But if 'twas my will led me to this end,
It is a higher Will that parts us now.
See, Ursula, see.
I cannot be the cause for final breaking
Betwixt you and your father. O, I cannot.
Think on me as I was. Forget— renounce me,
And with a humble loving meet new life.
Urs. Renounce! O Niclas— Now, poison, art thou [sure.
(Noise without. Enter a guard.)
G. The Prince of Brandenburg!— Await the Prince!
All (Starting with surprise.) The Prince!—
G. Hearing the voice of treachery in Thorn,

Prince Albert, back from Denmark, comes for judgment
And in pure justice will pronounce the doom.

Caj. The Prince!

Urs. O Niclas, 'tis the Prince.— 'tis Albert— Albert.
He'll save you— he will save you.— He is your friend.

Tol. Save!— O, he could not if he would, but he
Would not.— He comes my scourge.— He sent Bartoldus
To the fagot's maw, and will do like by me.—
Nor could he save me had he the plenal power,
For I have slain myself.

Urs. Then I'll be swift. Niclas, my father's threat
I heed not, nor your pleading. I lived for you.
Since 'tis not in my power to see you live
I will not live on still to see you— dead.
Father, are you so strong? O, you know not
The will that leads a woman. I pity you,
And for you will I pray with Mother, in heaven.
Niclas, you die. I see it.— Death is not far,
Yet nearer, O, still nearer stands to me.
You sent me to that Angelo for poison;
In my true bosom have I held it well.
I will defy the world with the same force
That led you for a nobler end to fight it.
O, the All-righteous knows my purpose.— Now
No earthly mandate can recall my vow.—
Prophetic father!— Now, cubus, art my friend.

(She takes out swiftly and swallows.)

Guards. She falls! She falls!

(All surge around her, concealing her from the audience.)

La R. O, what is this. 'Tis poison! O, 'tis poison!
Daughter! Daughter!— Let me— Daughter!

(He struggles to free himself, but is held back.)

(The group parts again, disclosing the litter. Ursula has fallen to a kneeling posture beside Tolternicus, her head resting on his lap. Tolternicus sits upright, looking down upon her.)

Tol. No word. Dream I? No word. What is this haze
That gathers in mine eyes? Ursula— Ursula,

(He bends and takes her head in his hands.)

Thy golden braids all black.— O, she is dead,
Dead. Dead. Dead. Dead. Dead.—
Spirit, art thou so strong.

Guard. The Prince! Make way! The Prince!

(Enter Prince Albert; behind him Bernard, Agnes, Rheticus and followers.)

Prince. Where is Tolternicus? Speak. He has our pardon.
Our day has dawned. Tolternicus is free.
(Seeing the litter.) O God, what murderous hand has heaped this bed?

Agn. Ursula! My Sister! (She faints.)

Prince (to the guards.) Take her away. (They bear back Agnes.)

(to Tolternicus.) Dost thou look on her?— Dead.

Tol. My— love. So— So— So.

(The men cover their faces.)

(Enter an apparition of Bartoldus.)

A. Bar. Tolternicus.

Tol. (Slowly looking up.) Dost call?— See me, Bartoldus.
I loved her— O, I loved her— O, I loved her.

(Enter an apparition of Ptolemy.)

A. Ptol. Tolternicus.

Tol. Ptolemy.— Comest thou to take me?
Now, heaven, I know I die.

A. Ptol. Come to us, Tolternicus—

A. Bar. (echoing.) Immortal Tolternicus.

Tol. O, all God's heaven comes down to weep with me.
Ptolemy, Bartoldus—

(Enter Apparitions of Campeggio and Tolternicus' mother, which come before Tolternicus, an apparition of Benedict following.)

Mother— O, Mother—
Good, thou, Campeggio— Benedict— O Mother,
Now do I know our work is not in vain,
And do we but remove one grain of sand
From the great wheel of progress' way, we shall
Die blessed.

Ber. He raves! He raves!

(All the visions except Ptolemy and Bartoldus for the moment vanish.)

A. Bar. Tolternicus, thou hast borne out thy course.
Rise and now dwell with us.

A. Ptol. Tolternicus, immortal Tolternicus,
We, of the World Eternal, do bid you come.

(All of the visions reappear.)

All the Vis. We, of the World Eternal, do bid you come.

Tol. I thank you, heavenly Visions.— And— I— come.

(His head sinks slowly back on the pillow.)

(The apparitions melt away.)

Prin. O woeful end.

Ber.)
) O woeful, woeful.— Ursula,
Agn.)
Niclas, Benedict, Niclas, Ursula.

Caj. Yea, dead.

Prin. This is too dark for words.— How came this—?

Caj. O, let me in my cell weep this away.— [How?
Albert, Prince, my head from now is forfeit,
And with this last farewell my power is done.

(He slowly bends and kisses Tolternicus' hand.)

Prin. Thy head is forfeit? Thy power is done?— Not so.
O Cajetan, I know your noble purpose,
And for this brave attempt hold you to my heart.

(He draws Cajetan to him.)

(Day has been slowly breaking. Now the beams of the rising sun shine in at the window.)
Day, art thou come at last— at last—
With thy gold beams from heaven to dissolve
Black, hateful night.— O Cajetan, my friend,
The bloody wars are done. Denmark has victored
And Brandenburg is Catholic no more.
On high a newer banner floats in glory,
And our true freedom dates from this new morn.
Let me before this dead that strove so high
Proclaim to all the world my new attempt.
I here do banish from my realm and name
The bloody banner of the Inquisition.

Tolternicus, for thee I'll give my share,
And in my lateness do a little penance.
Not mere thy monument will I upraise
In the broad space where come the city-s crowds
To gaze and to admire,
But in a higher, nobler, sacred form
Will tell the world of thy eternal striving.
Thy banished pages will I print in gold,
In thousand copies spread from Rome to Denmark,
And let thee raise thy monument alone—
Alone— alone— as thou hast ever striven.

Rheticus. Weep for him not. His soul is too titanic.
He labored in a prison to break its bars,
And of those bars has broken still the strongest.
Honor him, for he is great beyond all time.
Give thanks to God that in His boundless mercy
This giant walked the earth in purest toil,
And for his fruit reared up an edifice
Eternity will gaze at in its prime.
The day has come when man may speak his mind
And do his God-given share to raise mankind.

(A bell tolls.)

(Curtain.)